

# LONDON SOCIETY.

JUNE, 1898.

## A Trial Trip.

By Capt. H. WILLING.

IN FOUR PARTS.

### PART III.—CHAPTER XI.

By this time the season is upon us, and the bathers arrive *en masse*. I was very fond of sitting on the rocks, looking at their antics, thinking of the old days, when I had watched them at Trouville with my dear father and uncle. The "gets up" are not so wonderful, but much more modest, so far as walking down to the water goes. Each man and woman walking over the sand was enveloped in Turkish towelling, but arriving in one foot of water, they quickly abandoned all surplus covering. I made acquaintance, while sitting there, with a very romantic German lady; she was staying at the "Hôtel des Anglais," and begged me to go and see her, which I did.

One day Jack and I were at lunch—on Jack's eggs—you know what I mean—when she excitedly rushed through the garden, into the room, and throwing herself at Jack's feet, implored him to take up her "cause," as she had been grossly insulted by the hotel-keeper. Jack immediately rose with the intention of hitting somebody, but she delayed his warlike ardour, by saying that she was very hungry, which obliged him to return to his professional duties as cook.

After being fed, she explained to us, a little more coherently, that the landlord's offence had consisted in placing some very dirty travellers near her at the table-d'hôte lunch, and refusing to remove them. After that, Jack did not see his way to hitting anybody. She begged us, with tearful protestations, not to send her back to the "Hôtel des Anglais"—as if we could. At last as she appeared to want to take up her abode with us, Jack explained, bluntly, we had only one bedroom; she then entreated his "amiable wife" to accompany

her to the "Hôtel de France" (where we dined) to make terms—she felt too shy to go alone. I reluctantly went. I hate to be mixed up in those sort of rows. She made her arrangements with the well-painted wife of the proprietor, hinting at the probable arrival of a mysterious baron. Madame, understanding the situation apparently too well, offered rooms that communicated through doors in a wardrobe, ingeniously concealed. The baroness—she was a Baroness Hausen—replied with dignity there was no need for that, as the baron was an "old man," and travelled with a man-servant; for that reason she appeared to think she ought to be taken remarkably cheap. I was glad when the business was finished; I felt very much ashamed at the whole affair.

Returning, she overwhelmed me with thanks, gratitude, and praises of my "worthy husband"—such a ridiculous name to call Jack; as if there was anything "worthy" about him! She spoke English perfectly, with the irritating precision of a German. After she had retired to pack, we went for a walk. What was my surprise, and Jack's annoyance, to find her, on our return, in the next cottage adjoining ours, surrounded by women, to whom she was giving orders for cleaning.

"But what are you going to do with the room you have taken at the hotel?" I remonstrated with her.

"Oh, well," was her cool answer, "after you and your worthy husband had gone walking, I thought how much pleasanter it would be to live very near you, and share this garden (I groaned), so I have made all arrangements, and taken the cottage for three months. Ach, so! how happy we shall all be together." She seized my unwilling hand, and before the charwoman and Jack, proceeded to embrace me.

"And how about the hotel?" I feebly insisted.

"Oh, I can't help the hotel," she answered, with a snort, and sort of impatient paw of her foot. She was very like a horse in appearance, I should say a riding horse, with a temper; her age was about fifty-five, and she had three sons in the German army.

Oh! how often I wished in the ensuing weeks, she had never been a mother.

Thus she caused us great disagreeability at both hotels. This may seem a small matter, but living in a small place, it counts for a great deal. It also made Jack nasty to me, and we rowed a bit, he

said I had a horrid habit of taking up chance acquaintances. Anyway, this chance acquaintance punished me pretty well. She was always sending her maid in to ask me to go and see her; she spent a large portion of her time in bed, and when she sent word that she was so ill, I felt it would be fiendish not to comply, though I privately believed there was nothing the matter with her, but a too hearty consumption of cream cheese, which she used to devour wholesale, not from greediness, but in the fond hope of regaining through it the rounded forms of youth. She suffered terribly from love-sickness, and descanted to me by the hour of the beauties and virtues of her dear baron. I hope I have explained she was a widow.

"He is such a de-e-ear man," she would assure me, "but he will not come to me, he thinks his health would suffer. Do, madame, dear madame," if I had given her an inch, she would have called me by my Christian name, "read this letter from him," and she would thrust into my hand pages of German hieroglyphics, written on the most awfully black edged paper I have ever seen. As well as I could understand, the poor man did not seem a bit in love with her, nor particularly grateful for her passion for him; his wife had only been dead a few months, and he seemed to be very ill and unhappy. However, she was mad about him, and sent to Paris for cheap, smart furniture for her sitting room, all for his benefit—but he never came.

When she exhausted the perfections of her baron, she would fall back on those of her sons. Oh, dear, what a time I had, and what a bore she was.

A few weeks after she had taken possession of her cottage, I had a birthday (I am sorry to say I was thirty-one), and my kind old Uncle Archie sent me a present of twenty-five pounds. On the strength of this, I begged, prayed, bullied and coaxed Jack to have a little change, just a small trip, to get away from the Baroness Hausen. Jack told me kindly, but firmly, he considered me the most extravagant of the two of us, which view of the case came to me quite in the light of a novelty; however, to Caen we went, and also to St. Luc-sur-Mer.

## CHAPTER XII.

We considered Caen a very fine town, and I immensely enjoyed the shops after so long an absence. There the French girl, also woman *à bicyclette* was to be seen in perfection, and they did not in the least mind coming to table-d'hôte in their frightful costumes.

I remember one awful mother, in covert coat made very short and full, and great wide knickerbockers. She looked, when she sat down to table, as if she had clothed her lower limbs in two distended balloons.

At St. Luc, in the little Casino, I noticed a very pretty English woman,—very good form too; she was accompanied by a young man whose face was familiar to me, and yet I could not think who he was. When Jack joined me, I looked about for them to point them out to him, but they had vanished, nor did I see them again while I was there.

After about a week we returned to Carteret; we could not afford to stay away any longer.

A change had come over the spirit of the baroness's dream; she was now sulky with her beloved one, and had determined to devote the time that she used to spend in writing to, and thinking of him, in the improvement of her personal charms. Under the guidance of a complexion book, by the Baroness de Stafe, her face was undergoing a course of electricity, and after our return, all day we heard the peculiar burr of the battery. I don't know that it did her much good.

The next evening I was sitting in the soft summer twilight, on the terrace of the "Hôtel de France," when I saw flit past me the pretty figure of the girl I had observed at St. Luc. I asked the hotel-keeper if he knew who she was, but he replied rather crossly that "all English ladies and names were exactly alike." Ever since he baroness had disappointed him, he had been as nasty as he dared to be. I then asked Miss Downer, the "gentleman's lady-companion," but with a giggle, she replied, she had seen nobody whom she considered pretty. Two or three mornings afterwards, I had a bad headache, and Jack advised me to go for a walk, undertaking to mount guard himself over the thieving Marie. I went to Barneville to see the doctor, who is also the only chemist; he was out, but his wife promised



me some quinine, and ushered me, with much ceremony, into a stuffy little drawing-room, the windows of which were never opened, or the blinds drawn up for fear of dust. How terribly French that drawing-room was, with its padded silk walls, and gilt-legged velvet furniture—a cross between a jewel case and a padded cell. She was a very pretty woman, with fawn-like eyes, and she confided to me how dull she found Barneville, and how old-fashioned all her beautiful dresses were becoming: she left the room for a minute, returning almost staggering under the weight of five-year-old triumphs of Worth and La Ferriere, and bringing a cloud of orris cachet powder with her. We discussed gowns for nearly an hour, when I left, feeling much better in spite of the atmosphere and scent. A novel cure for headache.

On entering our garden gate, to my surprise there was Jack comfortably chatting with the girl I had been curious about. He explained to me that she did not care for hotel life, and had called at the cottage, looking for rooms.

"Of course we can't put you up," said Jack, turning to her, and evidently admiring her fresh English style. "But what do you think," looking at me, "would the Baroness?"

"Well I could ask her," I remarked doubtfully.

"Of course we should not like to be a bother to anyone," said the Unknown, in a very high-bred voice, perhaps a "little more so."

She then explained to us, that "monsieur" was not always with her, that he was travelling, but that he liked being quiet when he did come, and hated hotels.

"I suppose he is in the army?" said Jack, glancing down at the regimental buckle, which bore the number of the "Royal Irish," clasping her slender waist.

"No," she replied, "I don't think so—at least, I mean he is not—he is not very strong. Our name is Walters."

"I will go and ask the baroness," I said, "or perhaps," remembering that her complexion might be in full swing, "you would come back a little later?"

"I will return about five; thank you so much." And she took herself gracefully away.

"How nice she is! I do hope the baroness will take her in, it would be delightful!" I exclaimed enthusiastically.

"She is a fetching little woman," said Jack, rather slowly. "I

suppose it's all right—but it was a bit odd about that belt, I should not like you to get mixed up with queer people."

"You are very suspicious, Jack; I am sure at my age I might be allowed to know a lady."

"It's as well nobody else alluded to the age. Come, take your bread and milk."

Jack always went in for sustenance when we were going to have a dispute. We did really feed on that in the middle of the day at times, it was cheap and satisfying.

I found the baroness dressed, lying on the floor, face downwards. The book of instructions recommended that position highly for reducing the figure. She became remarkably businesslike at once, and stated she could let them have two rooms very easily if they paid her well, fitting one up as a sitting-room with the furniture she had got from Paris. Evidently, she had given up all hopes of her baron. I told her they must arrange money matters between themselves, and returned to my own cottage highly delighted with the success of my mission.

"It's a curious thing," remarked Jack, "but do you know, Dickie, there is a resemblance between that Mrs. Walters and you?" Jack is lying on a pile of cushions on a sofa ingeniously devised by me, after the pattern as shown in "Our Flat," after the hired furniture has been removed.

"She is much younger than I am," I say, thoughtfully.

"Oh, of course she is ever so much younger than you," replies Jack like a great blundering man.

"Her nose turns up," I remarked, with a certain amount of spite.

"Oh, yes," said Jack, impatiently; "I daresay if you picked her to pieces there would be no resemblance. Nevertheless, when you put her together again, there would be a likeness to you. I daresay the husband is a howler," added Jack.

"Why?" I asked, indignantly. "Is it because she resembles me? Are you a howler?"

"My dear child, when you talk nonsense, silence is the best reproof." Marie at that moment appeared in the doorway to perform her washing-up duties behind the screen.

"Oh! so mi-lady's sister has arrived?" she queried, eagerly. "The young lady we saw talking to mi-lord?"

After that I gave up, and felt Mrs. Walters and myself must

have been sisters in the pre-Adamite age. I treated her and the baroness to a sumptuous tea, despoiling the garden to make my screen a thing of beauty.

The baroness looked so serenely content, I concluded money was no obstacle to the Walters housing themselves comfortably.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

NEXT day she and a heap of up-to-date luggage arrived and I enjoyed myself for nearly a week, assisting her to arrange her rooms.

She had the greatest quantity of photographs I have ever seen, but they were nearly all of actors and actresses. For all her youth, I soon discovered she knew her London (my London) perfectly, by name at all events. She had also a good deal of cheap up-to-date philosophy, such as can be obtained from a careful study of the nineteenth century, or easier still, by repetition of the sentiments of a very young man. She told me she had written to her husband, saying she had taken rooms in the house of a German baroness, (I think she thought a good deal of the Baroness) but that she had not told him anything about us, and that he did not care much for English people, and that she did not know our name.

"Is he not English?" I asked.

"Oh, yes!" she replied.

"You have not been very long married?"

"No," blushing so vividly, I felt ashamed of pumping her.

I have not said anything lately of accounts, as we had at last contrived to live upon our income. The twenty-eight francs a week to the Hotel, formed our only weekly account. Butter, milk, eggs, we bought in the village, and brought home ourselves, and anything we got from the little grocer in Carteret we paid cash for. Thus we managed, I consider, splendidly.

One day, Mrs. Walters and I went to see a beggar woman, who had given us a thrilling description of her home, which she described as cut into the sand dunes. Unlike most French people, she was possessed of an enormous family, and did nothing but trail them from house to house, saying, that her maternal duties prevented her, (and apparently her husband), from doing any work.

We walked over the "Falaise" together, enjoying the keen, bright

air ; we had invited the baroness to join us, but she was sitting in the sunniest part of the garden, allowing a mixture of cucumber and milk, to dry on her upturned face, and she was not to be diverted from this interesting employment.

The beggar was a decided "do." The cottage would have been a disgrace to any Irish hovel, so after administering a severe lecture on dirt, and improvidence to Mrs. Walters' amusement,—that is to say, as much as she understood, for her education in French had been decidedly neglected,—we turned homewards, and I invited her to join Jack and myself at one of our famous egg lunches.

I went with her into her sitting-room, when we heard a voice from upstairs calling in peevish accents.

"Mab, Mab, I have been waiting here an hour for you. I do wish you wouldn't be always dashing about with some d—— foreigner or other!"

I drew myself up on hearing this, "Perhaps you would prefer not coming to luncheon, Mrs. Walters, under these circumstances?"

"Oh! Thank you. No I think not, it's Walter, and I am afraid he's cross. Thank you all the same," she added as an after-thought, turning to fly up the little stairs.

"I told you he'd be a howler," said Jack, when I related the circumstances to my spouse, "Besides, it's very nice for you to ask people to lunch, but if you were cook, you wouldn't be so hospitable!"

For the two following days, we saw nothing of the Walters, which considering the circumscribed space in which we all lived, was very wonderful. However, on the third day, I saw them in the distance, walking along a lane in front of us. He was very tall and thin, as tall as Jack, but not well "set up."

"He's certainly not in the Service," said Jack, criticizing his appearance, "still, he looks a gentleman, from the back view at any rate."

"Is it not curious, that he should be called 'Walter Walters'?" I said.

"Showed a great want of imagination on the part of his parents, or his thingmibobs, or himself, if he made up the name. Let us turn off here," he continued; "they walk so slowly, we should be up to them in a minute, and I don't wish to appear to be dodging them about."

So we turned off, to my secret annoyance. I fear age is creeping over me, and I am developing into a prying old woman. But we were destined to meet.

That evening after dinner, I felt cold—the evenings were always cold in Carteret—and I had forgotten to bring a wrap; Jack volunteered to accompany me home to fetch one. Opening the garden gate, we came face to face with the young couple. Red and white the young man turned, while Jack appeared, all of a sudden, to become perfectly stiff and rigid. Poor little Mrs. Walters stared in astonishment at them both.

"This is rather a surprise, Walter," said Jack, grimly.

"I don't know what you mean," stammered the other. "Or why you address me in that manner."

"Won't wash!" replied Jack calmly, knocking the ash off his cigar. "I am perfectly aware you are my nephew, Walter Reagan, though it is some years since I have seen you, you are but little changed."

"I call it a d——d cowardly thing to hunt a fellow down; d——d ungentlemanly thing to thrust yourself where you're not wanted," returned the boy (he looked a boy), furiously.

"Don't swear in the presence of ladies—at least you won't swear in the presence of my wife," replied Jack angrily, motioning him to let us pass. "Well," he remarked to me, striking a light, as we entered our own sitting-room. "Well, we have met 'somebody' at last with a vengeance."

Jack sat down and smoked largely. It was a little way he had when he was thinking much.

"I don't care a toss," he said at last, "about the fellow or what he said to me; after all he is only a boy. Still, I owe it to you, to find out whether that woman is really his wife or not."

"Poor girl!" I said, sorrowfully, "I hope she is. Fancy anyone being in love with Watty! What a bore I used to think him years ago at Donydeen."

"He's an impudent young cur," said Jack, savagely. "And the devil of it is, I can't make up my mind as to what course of action I am to pursue." And he helped himself to a "Calvados" and soda (it wouldn't have been Jack if he hadn't required refreshment). "Calvados" was an extra, acquired out of my birthday present.

Then things got very wretched, and our relations with the English occupants of the cottage became decidedly strained.

Mrs. Walters—I still thought of her by that name—bowed hurriedly and frightenedly, if she found it impossible to get out of our way, and Jack would lift his hat, with a scowl that was most unlike him.

The weather shared the general depression, and became very "weepy"—"a soft, fine rain," as they would say in Ireland. The Baroness seized the opportunity, and was to be seen early and late, promenading the garden in the thinnest of thin cambric gowns. La Baroness de Staf recommends rain as the very greatest beautifier woman can employ, not only for the face, but for the figure generally—the "altogether," as dear little Trilby calls it. And so the Baroness wetted as much "altogether" as civilisation would permit.

Madame de Staf must have a constitution of iron if she practises as she preaches.

"Tell that old lunatic to put on something woollen," said Jack. Poor old dear, he was like a bear with a sore ear those days.

I told her, but she did not mind me.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

A FEW days afterwards her maid came rushing in, begging me to go and see her; she had had a dreadful night, and the maid feared she was in high fever.

"Old fool's got a cold," said Jack. "I don't want you to go bothering into that house."

But I didn't mind him, and accompanied the maid to the Baroness' room. The poor thing had really an awful cold, so I promised her some simple remedies, and promptly went back for them. Jack grumbled at me, but full of my mission of mercy, I returned to her, and I flatter myself, did her a great deal of good. Of course all this took a little time, but I enjoyed the idea of Jack being chained at home watching our "Thief."

Feeling, however, he had been punished enough, and the Baroness having fallen into a quiet sleep, I was slipping home; but at the bottom of the staircase, I found Mrs. Walters evidently waiting for me. Poor little woman! How these last few days had changed her! She looked very pale and depressed, and with what I must vulgarly call "all the bounce" taken out of her.

"Oh, Lady Gwendoline," she said, catching hold of my dress, like a little child, "do please speak to me. I am so very, very unhappy, and Walter is very cross with me, too, and thinks it is all my fault because I took these rooms; but of course I did not know Major Reegan was his uncle. I thought his name was Walters—he married me in that name, and I was dreadfully frightened we were not married at all, but he says it's all right, that the name did not matter."

"Where were you married?" I asked her, looking down into the grey eyes that were so curiously like my own.

"We were married at a Registry Office in the Strand," she answered me, without any hesitation. "I would like to tell you all about it very much," she said, pleadingly.

"Where is your husband?" I asked her.

"He is upstairs; his cough is bothering him very much." I remember Watty had always been very delicate. "I do not know what to do with him, it's so difficult to please him." And the poor girl's lip dropped, and her eyes filled with tears.

"Does he know I am here?" I queried.

"No."

"Well, I tell you what is the best thing you can do; come in with me, and tell your whole story to Jack."

Of course she was very reluctant, and begged hard to confide in me alone, but I felt if things were ever to be put on a pleasant footing, Jack must be allowed to decide for himself: or to think he was deciding for himself, which comes to the same thing. I took her to Jack, and he received her with cold, grand courteousness that frightened her out of her wits, and it was some time before she was able to tell her story.

After all it was a very simple and common-place one.

Running downward steadily, as far as social position went, and with, of course, the inevitable "clergyman's daughter," without whom no tale could be complete. In this case, it was her mother who was the daughter of a poor Irish curate, who went to seek her fortune in London, as a daily governess, and was glad enough to change that position, and become the wife of a fairly well-to-do chemist in Oxford Street. Thus, Mabel Smith's first memories were of a suburban order, her life having been passed in a semi-detached villa at Upper Tooting. But the chemist, unfortunately—or was it



his Irish wife?—was of an ambitious turn of mind, and went in for speculation of some sort or other, which resulted in bankruptcy, followed by death.

The widow was left penniless with her son and daughter. The son being a clerk in a solicitor's office, with aspirations to become a poet (ye gods!). He was neither very able, nor very anxious to assist his mother and young sister, so it came to pass, that as Mabel had a pretty talent for dancing, and a sweet little voice, she was fortunate enough to get on the Gaiety stage as a chorus girl, and supported herself and her mother on her salary. Mabel was evidently snubbed by the embryo duchesses and viscountesses that compose that distinguished chorus. Amongst all the men who have the *entrée* behind those scenes, the only one with whom she fraternized was the young man whom she believed to be Captain Walters, probably the fact that he was nearly as shy as herself had a good deal to do with the attraction. He neither made love to her, or was "rude" (her own words), but simply "nice." He often went to tea with her mother and herself in their tiny rooms at Hammersmith—of course the Tooting villa had long been given up—and would afterwards accompany them both to the theatre. Probably this platonic friendship would never have drifted into matrimony, had not Fate given it a "leg up."

One day, on calling at the Hammersmith rooms, Captain Walters found the little chorus girl drowned in tears. Her mother was very ill with inflammation of the lungs, and the doctor, who had just left, offered little or no hope. She greatly desired to see Captain Walters; and rather against the grain, the young man complied with her request. The poor woman naturally wished to speak of her daughter, so young and pretty, with none to look after her but her selfish brother.

It was the old story, but perhaps it was the most unselfish act of Watty's life, when he promised he would take care and marry little Mabel, and allowed the poor mother to die in peace.

I do not think that she had been a designing woman; surely, had that been the case, she would have long ago informed herself of Captain Walters' standing and position, and intentions regarding her daughter.

Mabel was married to him, as she stated, at the Registry Office, a week after her mother's funeral, her brother, solicitor and poet,

condescending to be present. This had occurred exactly two months before they came to Carteret.

It was not without much faltering and a good many tears, as she described her mother's death, that the little woman told her tale, and I could see that Jack had visibly relented towards his niece-in-law.

She left us immediately after her confession, saying, she was afraid Walter would be angry at her absence. Indeed, I afterwards found she invented an expedition to Barneville to get something for himself—to account for her being away so long.

Watty was extremely exacting with her.

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#### CHPATER XV.

HER departure was a considerable relief to Jack. And though it was long past the hour for our *déjeuner*, he put on his thinking cap, *i.e.*, took his pipe, and begun to smoke vigorously. I waited with patience for the oracle to consume sufficient tobacco, to speak with wisdom, notwithstanding the fact that I was very hungry.

"Puts me into a regular hole, dontcherknow,"

I can stand a good deal from Jack, I have the greatest belief in and respect for him, but I can't stand "dontcherknow."

"Jack!" I cried with temper, "if you ever use that horrid word again, I will leave the house."

A little temper is often a good thing. In this case it roused my "better half" into immediate action.

"Well, I don't see much harm in the word," he replied, getting up and putting away the pipe, "but I won't use it, if your sensitive hearing is disturbed. I know what is the matter with you," making an expressive gesture towards the screen.

After lunch, we both felt more amiable, and Jack unfolded his views.

"It is really a very unpleasant position," he said. "This boy has made a ridiculous and imprudent marriage."

"I think she is quite a good girl," I said, interrupting him.

"My brother knows nothing about it," went on Jack, taking no notice of my observation. "I wonder where he thinks the young scamp is? I should not care in the least about it—that is to say,"

correcting himself, "it would not have been my affair, had they not come and planted themselves in Carteret."

"Do you intend to inform Sir Richard?"

"I don't know," said Jack. "This girl is evidently married to him. I have no doubt she has spoken the perfect truth; but he married her under a false name, and I really don't know if he intended honourably by her or not. She must be an innocent girl, too; there are not many Gaiety girls that could be taken in in that way; they generally are better read up in man's position and income than he is himself."

"Of course you speak from experience!"

"I have known a few," replied Jack calmly.

Still we were no nearer a solution of the situation than we had been before.

"Will you let me go and see him, Jack? I would like to act peacemaker. You know she says he is suffering terribly from his cough."

"He is a poor rickety fellow, I daresay he will die quite young," said Jack.

"Oh! what a heartless fellow you are!"

"I am not heartless," said Jack, nevertheless looking a little ashamed. "I was only stating my conviction. No, I certainly won't have you going near him."

"Very well," I replied, with outward meekness, but a secret determination to carry out my project.

That night I slept very badly. It was so hot, or perhaps I felt hot. The window nearest me was open, the thick wooden "Persians" only being shut. I could hear through them my nephew's continued hacking cough, and now and then his voice rising in fretful complaint. I turned, twisted, moved the pillow a hundred times, dashed from one side to the other in search of a cool place—all no use. Then I began to think how sad night thoughts are; even a frivolous person like myself becomes completely wretched. The thoughts and people of long ago rise up before me.

In fancy I again saw my poor mother—of course it was pure fancy for I did not even know her, still I sympathise truly with her history—one butterfly with another. Then I think of the little baby boy, who only stayed with me three short days. How easy it is to think of him as a dear little angel, with a fat and chubby body, a halo of

golden hair, and nice white wings—but how impossible to imagine my dear old father got up in that style!

I think of him in his stained pink coat, his dirty top boots; and in imagination I fasten a large pair of white wings on his back (he would want them very strong, for he was tall and heavy). And then I go into a fit of laughter, that is not very far from tears, over the picture my fancy has conjured up.

This won't do! I am getting very foolish—perhaps irreligious. I strike a match and light the candle, and go softly over the floor to have a look at Jack. I need not be afraid, it would take a cannon's roar to wake him. What a great, strong, long, thing he looks, as he lies there with the sheet over him, on the too short wooden French bedstead: his head and pillows placed on the top of the woodwork, supported by his great arms, that looked so curiously white in contrast to his sunburnt neck and face. Short of running a pin extremely deep into him, there is no comfort or companionship to be got out of him, so I go back again to the window I am pleased to call my own, and blowing out the candle, unfasten the wooden shutters.

It is a dark night, and the light streaming from my nephew's window makes a patch that reminds me of the rays that glorify a fairy in a pantomime. By its aid I plainly see Artemesia and the postman bidding each other "good night." They do it very affectionately. Naughty! naughty Artemesia!

Then I listen attentively, and I catch a word here and there of Watty's scolding. His wife seems to be crying; I long to get to him and give him a good shaking, in spite of his cough. Jack is right—he always is!—Watty is nothing but a cur and a bully also.

Well, I am beginning to feel very cold; it's too silly to stand like this at the open window, and risk being obliged to stay in bed myself to-morrow. If Jack only knew what I was at, wouldn't he hurl common sense at me? So I shut the shutters, jump into bed, and am soon asleep.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

I GAINED Jack's consent to my project of going to see Walter next morning. I have a way of taming my Samson, known only to myself. So after breakfast, I went in next door. First I paid the Baroness a visit; she was so much better, that under treatment she

had only had a piece of stale bread and dandelion tea for her "*premier déjeuner*." She had also had a letter from the Baron; he had gone to reside at a hydropathic establishment near Strasbourg. I had some difficulty in getting away from her, as she was very loquacious. However, I presently succeeded and crossed the passage to Walter Reagan's door. A well bred pair of boots guarded the entrance standing on trees waiting to be cleaned. I knocked and entered; Watty looked ill, thin, and so discontented. Though one window was wide open, the room felt hot, and unaired. Confusion reigned, medicine bottles, cups, saucers, being multiplied everywhere. I saw at a glance my nephew occupied the best bed. It was a small thing, but in holy matrimony it means much.

"I am so glad to see you, Gwen," he said, flushing all over, and holding out his hand. He is the only person who ever calls me "Gwen." My father never did so, or my uncle, as it was my mother's pet name. I hate to be called it, but however, I let it pass, and spoke to him as kindly as possible.

"Oh! it's all the draughts in this cursed hole," he answered. "I'd have got away if I could after that row with Uncle Jack, though what business it is of his—"

"If you are going to speak like that of your uncle, I shall go away directly!"

"Oh! please don't!" he cried, raising himself up, the effort bringing on such a distressing fit of coughing, I quite relent and take the chair offered me, by his poor worn and washed-out looking wife. Then we talk a little bit, and she busies herself not very successfully in trying to tidy the room.

Presently he asked her to go downstairs, and see if that fool of a cook has got his *consommé* ready. And the little wife immediately disappeared.

"Poor child," I say to him as the door closed behind her. "How very pale and tired she looks."

"Oh, she's not strong," replied her husband. "She used to get awfully knocked up after her work at the theatre. Do you know what first attracted me to her?"

I professed my ignorance, and he continued.

"It's because I think her so like you, though not nearly so good looking. Oh! Gwen!" taking my hand between his two feverish ones, I have always admired you so much, you remember even when we were boy and girl together."

"I remember nothing about it," I replied, drawing my hand rapidly away, but he looks so weak, so wretched, and so young, I cannot feel very angry. "Your wife has certainly a young look of me."

"She is very young," Watty says, "she is only just twenty-one," I feel surprised. The Gaiety must be a hard school, she looks much older, or I think so.

"Her mother's maiden name was Vescoyle," Walter informs me "Perhaps she may be some relation of yours?"

"Perhaps so," I reply, not very pleased at the idea.

All Irish people are related, if you go back far enough.

"Now Watty," remembering the real object of my visit, "I want you to tell me candidly what your intentions are. First of all, why did you marry Mabel under a false name?"

"Well, it's not exactly a false name," he replied, telling a feeble lie. "You see, I did not want my father to know I went behind, he's dead against that sort of thing—at least for me—thinks I'm too delicate for those kind of pleasures." He gave a nasty little laugh, and I began to repent having come near him.

"You have done very wrong," I said to him, with increasing severity. "Where does your father think you are now?"

"Oh! He knows I'm knocking about somewhere."

"Alone?"

"Well, as much alone as any young fellow is."

"Watty, you make me hate you! You're wrong all round. You are deceiving your father, and you are putting your wife into an irretrievably false position."

"There's plenty of time to make it all right," he replied, with sulky positivism."

"There is never plenty of time to do right," I replied urgently; "we must do right now, at any moment it may slip away from us, and become the great hereafter, over which none of us have any control."

"I wish Mabel would bring up my soup," is all Watty answers, turning away petulantly and coughing.

"Watty, if you don't listen to me, and write to your father, informing him of your marriage, most assuredly your Uncle Jack will do it, and that without loss of time!" I get up angrily, as I say it, feeling pretty disgusted with him.

"I'll have none of his d——d interference!" Suddenly sitting up in bed and almost screaming, and then comes such a fit of coughing, and to my horror I see a long crimson stain flowing across his handkerchief, down on to the sheets. His wife and the cook rush in, in answer to the shriek I cannot suppress. The cook, with the usual stupidity of her class, making the painful scene worse, by her loud exclamation that Monsieur is dying. After a few moments, he seemed a little better, and we laid him back on his pillows, I then seized the opportunity of slipping back to Jack. He looked very shocked when I told him what had happened, and confirmed my secret fears, that I was a good deal to blame in the matter.

"I am afraid you excited him, Dicky," he said reproachfully, mechanically putting on his deerstalker, and taking his stick, quite unnecessary adjuncts to a sick-room—his words made me wretched, and I should have burst out crying, had it not been for Marie's saving presence.

"No!" added Jack determinedly, as I was following him—forgetting my 'thief' who looked visibly disappointed at my remaining—"you don't go in there, at all events for the present. Send Marie to Barneville, to fetch the doctor, as quickly as possible."

I did not send Marie. Inaction was hateful to me, I locked up the house and went myself. How I wished I could cycle! Much as I had laughed at popular amusement, I never longed for anything more than I did at that moment, for a "tin gee-gee" to bear me quickly on its flashing wheel, to the Barneville doctor. However, I walked there as fast as a young Irish woman can walk, and that is saying a good deal.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

JACK stopped all day next door, even sending me alone to the hotel for dinner. He came in about eleven o'clock, looking very tired and worried.

"He is better, certainly," replying to my query, "but how long this improvement will last I cannot tell, the doctor is not very hopeful, though he thinks he will pull through this bout, but you see, the responsibility is very great; I must certainly let my brother know to-morrow, besides he ought to have superior advice."



Then Jack went to lie down, only to rise again in a few hours, and return to his watch. Next day he telegraphed Watty's illness to his father, not of course explaining his marriage by wire, and also sending through the same medium to the greatest chest specialist in London. It was some time before he got an answer to either of his messages. Sir Blank Blank was on the Continent, taking a holiday, Sir Richard was laid up at Harrogate, with a bad attack of gout. It was from the medical adviser of the latter we heard at last, telling us it was utterly impossible for Sir Richard to come, expressing his great anxiety and gratitude to Jack, and empowering him to act in any way he considered advisable, also enclosing a cheque for one hundred pounds, which Jack had the greatest difficulty in cashing.

Sir Blank Blank never came, but a very clever French physician, who had built for himself a house on the Falaise, had recently arrived for his holiday from Paris, and was induced by our Barneville medico to come to see him. His opinion coincided exactly with the Barneville doctor (they are always so polite to each other). He said with great care, Walter might live a few years, but that he had scarcely a shred of lung left, that he must avoid all excitement, or much stimulant, and that the sooner he was taken to his own home the better. By this time he really appeared almost himself again, though very weak and irritable, and I could not help admiring the patient way in which Jack treated him, at the same time bringing pressure to bear on him, regarding a full confession of his marriage to his father, which he at last consented to do, and it was with infinite relief that Jack dispatched the letter. Privately he remarked to me—

"Considering the doctor's opinion of his life, I should think Richard would be glad he was married; anyway it's a stepping stone to cutting me out."

"No one can say, you don't say what you think," I replied. "But perhaps his marriage won't cut you out after all."

"Dead men's shoes"—he smoked the rest of his sentence.

A few days afterwards, when I was on duty one morning with Marie, I was surprised to see the garden gate open, and a young man—undoubtedly of the 'tripper class'—come up the pathway towards me. Carteret is pretty free from this obnoxious element, except when there is an excursion boat from Jersey, and even then, the pleasure-seekers mostly go away by train.

"Can you tell me, if this is 'Maisong Semang?'"

"This is Maison Simeon," I replied rather icily.

"Yes, Miss, that's what I said," he answered, with a stare.

"These houses and gardens are private."

"Yes Miss, but the 'parlez-vous' told me at the station, that the young English gent, who is sick, is staying here."

Now who could this bore be! "Mr. Reegan is too ill to see anybody at present"—I informed him.

"Reegan," he repeated, with visible disappointment, "I've made a mistake then, I came to see a gent and his wife, who is my sister." This then is the solicitor's clerk and poet: another relation for me! I got as red as if I had been detected in a great crime.

"You mistake the name," putting a freezing coldness into my voice. I felt my only refuge was extreme haughtiness. "I think the gentleman you are looking for is Mr. Walter Reegan."

"The swell who married my sister, called himself Captain Walters anyway." He looked at me suspiciously. "And who, may I ask, may you be, Miss? You'll pardon my asking you, as you're living in the same 'ouse, Miss, leastways perhaps I ought to say mam."

"I am not living in the same house with Mr. Walter Reegan, both he and his wife are living next door. I am his aunt." Now that was a most stupid thing of me to say, as I realised in a moment. The man's face became convulsed with laughter as he said—

"Lor, Miss, and I was thinking you quite serious," making a bold effort to come into the cottage, much to Marie's delight, who had a sort of supernatural way of understanding everything that was not her own business.

"Oh! lady fair, the joke was rare—but it didn't take in yours faithfully Edgar Verscoyle Smith."

Horrid man! How I hated 'Verscoyle Smith.'

"You had better go to the next cottage, at all events, I can give you no more information, and excuse me, I am going to shut the door." Waving him off the step, he lifted a much curled black hat, and departed, not however, to the next cottage, he evidently considered it was useless applying there. Marie, who was much interested in his movements, watched him over the garden wall, and told me had gone into the "Hotel des Anglais."

I went in, and cautiously beckoning Mabel out of the room, I in-

formed her of the new arrival. Poor girl, she appeared truly sorry; and I did not wonder at it.

"Oh, Walter took such a dislike to him, the only day he saw him, which was our wedding day. I am afraid if he comes here, it will throw him into a fresh state of excitement and perhaps retard his recovery."

"And yet he is your brother," I observed.

"And yet he is my brother," she repeated.

I wished we had Jack to fall back upon for advice, but he was amusing the invalid, with a two days old "*Sporting Life*," so making up my own mind, I said to her, "We will go across to the hotel and speak to him there," handing her one of my own numerous sailor hats and taking another myself. We found him just coming out of the hotel, so that our interview took place in the road, which, I think, mercifully shortened it, together with Mabel's formal introduction of myself, which had a wonderfully overawing effect upon Mr. Smith. He was very much behind the times in his admiration for a handle.

When Mabel had explained to him with touching earnestness the impossibility of inviting him to her cottage I softened the blow, by asking him to dine with us that evening at the hotel, and felt quite virtuous for having inflicted such a penalty on myself.

I don't know that Jack was very much obliged to me for my hospitality.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

We found him waiting for us, and I led him to the small table where we always dined. My husband's lordly manners had a most subduing effect upon him, so much so, that, in pity, I began to talk to him vivaciously, and I am afraid it was through my chatter that he learnt a good deal of the family history. He applied himself steadily to the cider. We ordered no wine, but cider will affect a man tremendously, if he only takes enough of it, especially Normandy cider. And Mr. Smith certainly showed signs of its telling on him. Suddenly leaning over and pointing to the long table d'hôte which we faced, he said to me in a loud voice, "There's old Atkinson, of Atkinson, Butter, Lincoln's Inn."

"How are you, Mr. Atkinson?" he shouted to the supreme disgust of a quiet, gentlemanly-looking man, who was sitting with his wife at the table. "Don't you remember me?" persisted Mr. Smith, "I was sent over to you by Jorking."

Mr. Atkinson appeared not to have the slightest remembrance, and Jack severely advised him to wait until after dinner to renew the conversation. He then turned the conversation to personalities.

"So my sister will be Lady Reegan, will she not your Ladyship?"

"Not during Sir Richard's life."

"No, of course not, but I meant in the natural course of events. And the Major is the next heir (he called it hair) if anything happened to my brother-in-law. Are you not, Major?" Jack hated to be called Major, but he did not deny the fact.

"I hope the hinvalid has got a good doctor? I think I ought to go myself and look after him to-morrow, a future Baronite should be carefully looked after."

"It is impossible that you can go near him," said Jack, "the slightest excitement is strictly prohibited by his medical adviser."

"Well," grumbled Mr. Smith, "I don't at all understand it, after all, I am a much nearer relation than any of you, why should I excite him?"

He took another long draught of cider, and I noticed how flushed his face had become. We neither of us answered his question, it was impossible to tell him that his mere presence would certainly drive poor Watty to the verge of madness. Annoyed at our silence he continued in louder tones.

"After all there is something fishy about it all round, very fishy indeed. Here's a gent married to my sister, as Captain Walters, turns out his name is not Walters at all, he's not to be seen, when I come in kindness to look after my sister, and the person who denies me hadmittance is the next heir! Begging your ladyship's pardon. There's something in the air, that don't seem to me fair, and I repeat it, I repeat it!" Emphasising his words by drumming loudly on the table. Most of the diners had fortunately left the room by this time, but those who remained, and the waiters who were clearing away, stared at us with undisguised astonishment. Jack put his eye-glass up. "If you have finished your fruit, you had better go and order coffee on the terrace, Gwendoline." I was not sorry to escape, but before I left the room I could hear Jack's voice:

"I must trouble you to explain yourself, Mr. Smith," I guessed the future baronet's brother-in-law was in for a roasting, if the cider had not too deeply obscured his intellect. I sat down without any attempt to order the coffee, as I greatly doubted Jack's appearance for some time, and a French lady and her two daughters took possession of me. They were all slightly afflicted with Anglomania, but having recently returned from a trip to Jersey, professed themselves disappointed with "Angleterre." They were surprised and a little puzzled at my statement that I had never been there, but the youngest girl, evidently better informed than the rest, solved the matter by explaining to her people that Madame was "une vraie Anglaise," whereas the people of Jersey were but "de faux Anglais" after all.

"And what a journey you have taken, Madame," she added, "just to see Carteret, which is nothing of a place; why did you not go to Paris?" I replied that I had been to Paris many times. And the mother stated her conviction that the restlessness of the English must be attributed to their abominable climate.

"The thing we were most disappointed with in Jersey was the army," they said, "it was so small and insignificant looking."

"But there is only one regiment there," I explained.

"Oh! yes, Madame, we know," said the youngest daughter, who was evidently spokesman for the party, "But the music, only one big drum, and the singing so out of tune."

"Did they sing?" I asked, somewhat mystified at the lack of musical instruments in the regimental band, quartered in Jersey.

"Oh, yes, Madame, they sang, and then the bonnets! Oh! the bonnets were so frightfully ugly!"

"The bonnets?" I said, helplessly at sea, "Why, it's an infantry regiment stationed here and they wear shakos."

"But, Madame, we are thinking of your religious army."

"You, mean, I suppose," a light breaking in upon me, "the Salvation Army."

"Yes." That is what they meant.

"The army in which all the women are called by the name of 'Sally,' and the men 'Captains.'"

What curious things interest foreigners. Presently I perceive Jack stalking towards me alone. He looked so self-satisfiedly amiable, that I half feared he had committed murder! But the French ladies having,

after an exchange of civilities departed, he relieved my mind by informing me that Mr. Smith had retired for the night.

"And what a cad he is," added my spouse, dropping his reserve, as he sat down at a little table out of ear-shot of the curious. "It is extraordinary the difference between the brother and sister; as for her, the more I see of her the better I like her, and he is not only a cad, but a low, common fellow, almost a rascal, a would-be black-mailer. However, I think I have shut him up.

But Jack was destined to be undeceived on that point.

The evening was fine, and for a wonder, warm, and we lingered there chatting; it was a relief to Jack to be in the air after being so long cooped up in his nephew's room.

To my great surprise, I suddenly saw the Baroness Hausen making her way through the now empty chairs towards us. Her appearance left much to be desired in her old dressing gown, the hat on her head was put on "anyway."

"Oh! Mr. Reegan," she exclaimed as she got up to us, "do please at once return with me. A man is there making the most disagreeable noise, and has, I fear, quite upset Mr. Walter."

Jack jumped up and we hurried down the hill as quickly as possible. What the Baroness stated was certainly true. Walter was standing upright in the little summer house, where he had ventured after dinner, the air being so warm, his face was convulsed with rage, and his whole form trembling with excitement, his wife was crying, and Smith with a courage, partly born of cockney impudence, and partly of Normandy cider, was demanding loudly an explanation of the "why and the wherefore" of the mystery in which Mr. Reegan had enveloped himself at the time of his marriage.

"I would have you know," said Smith, "that my sister is not without a protector while I'm about, though I want things pleasantly settled for all parties and no interference from them as fancies themselves superior to anyone else."

"Please don't excite Walter," pleaded Mabel, "it is so very bad for him."

"I wish you would go into the house and not bother," stormed Walter at her, "I'll teach this cursed cad to thrust himself where he isn't wanted."

Then Jack to the rescue. "Mr. Smith," possessing himself of Smith's arm with forcible affection, "I recommended you to go to bed

time ago, now I shall see you take my advice, unless you want a cold bath before retiring," giving him a gentle shake.

"Let me go," cried Smith, with a wriggle, and the next shake he got was not so gentle, and we heard a thud, as the gate opened and Mr. Smith appeared to descend the steps with unusual rapidity. Then d—d—d—d— came over the garden wall.

"I'll be even with you, you cursed upstart!"

He has not yet fulfilled his threat. He took his departure early next morning by the boat to Jersey, writing his sister a letter that, though violent and abusive, contained a certain amount of truth, and made us all feel that perhaps we had been rather unjust to him.

"That fellow will be a trouble to us yet," said Jack.

And perhaps he will.

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#### PART IV.—CHAPTER XIX.

THE next evening two letters arrived from Sir Richard, one to his son, calmly accepting the fact of his marriage. He had been warned by Jack to avoid all excitement for him.

To Jack he wrote much more extensively. Regarding the marriage he professed himself much disappointed, but reading between the lines we both considered he was rather glad of it than otherwise. He begged Jack to return to England as soon as possible, bringing his son and young wife with him, and of course myself, to whom he sent messages couched in a very apologetic tone. He trusted Jack would allow bye-gones to be bye-gones, and further stated that he had heard of a good appointment under government, which, if we would only return with Walter, he thought he had sufficient interest to procure for his brother.

"Well, Dickie, what do you think of this new aspect of affairs?" asked Jack, when we had finished our perusal of the letter.

"Oh! Jack, I am perfectly delighted, enchanted!"

"I thought you were perfectly happy in Carteret, on two pounds a week, and one square meal a day!"

"Oh, happiness is comparative, very comparative. Of course I am quite happy here in comparison to Southend and the horrid lodgings, but naturally the idea of your taking your own place again in the world drives me simply wild with delight."



"Well, this is Richard's idea, not yours, so its——"

"Oh! Jack, don't begin that, I can't stand it," almost hysterical with joy at the vision I had conjured up before me. I am not sure that Jack was not made Governor of India therein!

I went off to talk over everything with Mabel, who I do not think appeared so overjoyed as I did at the prospect of returning to town. She asked me anxiously what manner of man Sir Richard was, and I notice that her eyes were very red, evidently Watty had been pitching into her again. What a hateful invalid he was.

After many pro and con. thoughts, and the consumption of much smoke (as usual) Jack decided we had better return by Jersey. He considered it would be least fatiguing for Walter, who was still very weak and mending very slowly. The row with Mr. Smith, had certainly done him harm, though it did not actually bring back the more alarming of his symptoms.

It was settled we should remain one night at the "Grand Hotel," St. Heliers, crossing the next day to Southampton, where we should again rest, and so proceeding to Sir Richard's London house, where he waited our arrival. Jack gave us three days for our farewells and packing, but I think I was the only one who had any adieux to make. I toiled up the hill to La Moitié d'Anolouge, to bid good-bye to my dear old farmeress, and partook of such a quantity of cream and butter-milk over our farewell, that I was never able for one instant to forget the fact for the whole of the ensuing night. I went through the same ceremony with my friends the French ladies, barring the cream and butter-milk, they remarked reproachfully "after all Madame is returning home to Jersey."

"Only passing through," I corrected, but they did not believe a word of it, that was quite evident.

The gentleman's lady companion, Miss Downer, wished me good-bye, in quite a sprightly manner. "If you come next year, perhaps we may meet," she said glancing over her charge with a blush. On her finger I noticed a diamond ring that certainly had never been there before. The New Woman and the New Occupation had given way before the old order and "the old, old, story."

To Marie I gave so many black gowns, that she will be an ornament to the funerals of Carteret for many years; indeed the last figure I discerned on the Pier, as the little steamer with much bumping and yelling bore us from the shore, was hers, already clad

in one of her new possessions, and waving a black-bordered handkerchief I had forgotten to give her! So she stole it!

## CHAPTER XX.

I sentimentalised for a short time, as I sat on deck in our family group; the sea was as calm as a duck pond. I have heard there are people who are sentimental on leaving a prison, I should be one of those people. Then I turned my thoughts towards the desirable positions a grateful country was burning to offer Jack.

It was really very nice the way the ladies' papers coupled my name with his, and made much of my poor efforts to assist my "courteous" and "distinguished" husband in his many social duties.

"We had better go through our accounts, for the last time, Dickie," said that remarkable man, bringing his chair next to mine, "I have reduced them now to our daily expenditure." Away went the description of the lovely blue gown I was wearing in honour of H.R.H. at one of our grand balls and Two Pounds a week again stared me in the face.

### DAILY EXPENSES.

					s.	d.
Milk	...	...	...	...		2
Bread	...	...	...	...		3
Coffee	...	...	...	...		2
Cider	...	...	...	...		1½
Butter	...	...	...	...		2
Eggs	...	...	...	...		2
Hotel Dinner	...	...	...	...	3	4
Marie's Wages	...	...	...	...		2½
Spirit for lamp	...	...	...	...		1
Daily Rent...	...	...	...	...		10½
Washing	...	...	...	...		2
					<u>£0 5 8½</u>	

(We sometimes diversified the eggs by sausages or bread and milk, which came to the same money.)

"How splendidly, how superbly we have managed, even to a halfpenny!" I cried gleefully.

"Yes, I think we have done rather well," responded my lord and master. I looked at him, there were little wrinkles on his cheeks, he was smiling under that moustache of his. How like a man! Always to take the whole credit to himself, but I said nothing, certainly not, the more puffed up the male animal is in his own conceit, the easier is the matrimonial yoke for both parties.

How nice Mabel looked; I turned and considered her appearance. The breeze had brought a little colour into her usually pale cheeks, her eyes, looked deep and lovely, (I hardly like to say anything about her eyes because everyone considers them so like my own). She wore (of course) a sailor hat, and wore it well, which is certainly not a matter of certainty. She had discarded the officer's badge, since she discovered it was part of Walter's deception, and under her neat black and white Eton jacket her slender waist was folded round in a black silk Empire belt, her shoes and gloves were white, and it struck me again what a well-bred looking girl she was, then I thought of her name being Verscoyle, and of her likeness to myself, but after all that proved no relationship, for I was more like what my mother had been, than like any of my father's people.

One thing was troubling me very much, I greatly feared her horrid brother was still in Jersey, and knowing it was not a large place, naturally thought we should at once come across him. (You see I did not know Jersey). You might be living there twenty years without coming across your friend or enemy, though he might be located in the next street. St. Helier's has no meeting-place, or is one desired. People in Jersey go out shopping or visiting, if necessary, but they never go out to see and be seen, it would (in Jersey) be bad form.

"Did you say good-bye to the Baroness," Mabel said, suddenly turning to me.

"Well, I said a small good-bye to her, she was very busy over her toilet mysteries when I went to her."

"Oh! I had a long talk with her," Mabel said, "when I went to, you know," nodding her head.

Oh, yes, I knew, when she went to pay the rent for the rooms and for the servant's attendance, and the many other extras, that the sentimental Baroness was not above making up an account for.

"She told me," continued Mabel, "that she had still hopes that the Baron, dear man, would still come, he did not find the Sanitorium

doing him any good, if not she would sell her Paris furniture "au Cri," and hoped to get more for it than she had paid.

"Much more likely to get Norwegian salmon," said Jack's voice. Dear Jack, he was evidently getting hungry. And now the beautiful castle of Mount Orgueil comes in view with the flag of old England waving in the summer wind.

Jack and I walked for'ard to catch sight of the landing stage.

"So far we have brought him safely."

"And ourselves," I answer, looking up at the Union Jack and then proudly at my husband.

"Oh, Jack I do hope we shall never again have to live on two pounds a week, and that you are really going to get a good thing this time."

"Can any good thing come out of government?" said Jack. With which problem he went to assist Walter to land.

THE END.

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## Prospecting in British Columbia.

By HAROLD BINDLOSS.

FROM the Rockies, to the Pacific, and from Liard River to the Fraser mouth, the whole province of British Columbia is a region of wild and savage grandeur. Serrated ranges, many of them crested with eternal snow and glacier-ribbed, rise height beyond height, and lonely forests of redwoods, hemlocks, and cedars, of a size unequalled elsewhere in the world, save by the giants of California, fill the valleys between. Wide-spreading blue lakes lie glistening here and there among the sombre green of the conifers, and feed the countless rivers which for the most part sweep seaward through cañons no pen could fittingly describe.

To form a comparative idea of British Columbia, and also the greater portion of the Pacific slope between Mount Wrangel in Alaska and Mount Shasta in California, imagine Switzerland magnified many times, and spread over half the map of Europe. Throw

in the Norwegian fiords with the height of their rocky walls increased three fold, substituting mighty rivers for the Scandinavian salmon streams, and the whole will present a very inadequate picture of this land of weird and unearthly beauty.

In spite of many hardships and frequent hunger and cold, the free life of a wanderer through these forests has a fascination of its own, which having once entered into the heart of a man, may never be entirely driven out. Some at least of those who read will understand what the writer means, especially if they are of the genius artist, sportsman, or naturalist, which three are often combined in one, and such a man after once having lived this life will carry the memory of it with him to the end. It is, however, more especially with the economic side of the question we have to do, and in British Columbia, as elsewhere, a living is not to be won without strenuous efforts. As regards the Yukon district, the writer, who has himself prospected in the far North, ventures to predict that many who set out for this region will never get there at all. Others will assuredly return South disheartened by hopeless toil in the face of tremendous natural obstacles, and probably two-thirds of the would-be gold seekers will eventually settle down in the more accessible portions of the province. Now men who ought to know say there is still fine gold in Kootenay, Caribou, and Cassiar, perhaps as much as ever was taken out of California. Iron, copper, and coal abound; the redwood forests might supply the world with timber; river and inlet swarm with fish. Endless natural wealth—the immigration authorities say, and they speak truly; but men cannot live upon fir trees and scenery. Therefore, until roads have been hewn through the inaccessible forests, more bridges and railroads built, and tunnels driven through glacier-barred ranges, much of this natural wealth can hardly be turned to account, and indiscriminate emigration would be disastrous.

Meanwhile, the right kind of man, that is to say the hardy and adaptable, can generally count upon earning a sustenance there, even if he do little more. There are, of course, times when it is difficult even for the hardest adventurer to find an opening, and the writer remembers applying for a berth on a survey pack-train and being told, "we wanted seven men, and you are the hundred and fortieth." Also, he once saw written across a public employment register, "Will anyone give me a day's work for God's sake—a

strong man starving." These, however, are decided exceptions, and there is little doubt that a man of resource and ingenuity would ever come quite to grief, while he would certainly have greater chances of success than he could ever hope for in the overcrowded East.

It should also be borne in mind that in British Columbia life and property are as safe as in Great Britain. The dissolute western desperado as portrayed in fiction seems to have disappeared from the face of the Pacific slope, or at all events the writer never came across him all the way from Sitka Bay to the Walla-Walla wheatlands. On the contrary, it would be hard to find a more open-hearted and hospitable race than the wanderers of the ranges and the lonely forest ranchers, many of whom are men of good upbringing and education—University education too.

Probably the best way of showing what the life of the free-pro prospector or general adventurer really is, would be to describe, however inefficiently, a few actual phases thereof. The value of such personal reminiscences lies only in the fact that they are characteristic, and that thousands of others are doing the same thing to-day, while the writer sets down neither more nor less than he has seen with his own eyes.

Grey dawn was breaking one morning in June when a comrade roused me from a couch of cedar twigs among the boulders of the lonely Cameron lake, which lies hidden in the forests of Vancouver Island, and rising stiffly to my feet I found a fire of drift-wood crackling, and breakfast under way. It was not a sumptuous meal—a blue-grouse shot close by, flapjacks (which are pancakes cindery without a raw dough within), and the inevitable can of green tea, but one does not expect delicacies in the bush, and the scene was a striking one.

As the eastern heavens brightened the mist rolled back like a curtain from off the face of the lake, unveiling a wide stretch of crystal water shining steely grey in the early light. Then a little chilly air swept the vapour higher and higher up the steep hillside, and we could see the great redwoods rising two hundred feet above the water's edge, every rigid branch reflected in the clear depths below. The air was heavy with the fragrance of cedar and balsam, and the calling of a hidden river emphasized the stillness that hung over the lake. Slowly the mist thinned and melted

before the early sunlight, until at last every detail of the rugged heights which walled the valley in stood out with stereoscopic sharpness. Sombre conifers swathed their sides for a thousand feet or so, and then the scarped rock, ground smooth by sliding snow, ran up to the grey pinnacles silhouetted against crystalline azure.

Tom Cranton; my companion, was a forest rancher, and, like many of his kind, a man of stalwart frame and kindly heart, taciturn as a rule, and great with the double-handed axe. When he could afford it he worked twelve hours a day, hewing down and burning the great pines that cumbered his holding, in the hope that ten years hence he might have enough land cleared up to support a few cattle. Meantime, he occasionally made roads for the Government which led from nowhere to nowhere through the bush, and were only contrived to keep the settlers on the land, or he wandered half way to the Rockies, doing many things to earn sufficient to keep him in flour and tea during another period of labour on the "ranch." And this is the almost universal manner of life of the forest rancher who takes up land with only a small capital behind him. The writer having lost a wheat-crop in Assiniboia had rambled across much of the Pacific slope, and we were then on our way to try our luck at washing gold.

Strapping our packs about us—forty pounds of flour, and pork, blankets, a rifle, axe, shovel, and pan—we ploughed our way through the shingle beside the lake. The deerskin lashings cut into our shoulders, and the dilapidated half-boots cruelly abraded the flesh beneath, but these were the minor details of prospecting which do not count. Presently we struck what was called, by courtesy, the Wellington "waggon-road," and resembled the bed of a stream, being strewn with boulders and criss-crossed with fir-roots which periodically upset the one vehicle that rashly attempted its passage. Following it we climbed westwards until we stood panting upon the summit of the divide, a glorious panorama unrolled itself before us—range beyond range of pine-clad hills, and rock-walled valleys, and away to the north a line of glistening snow. Here we left the trail, and crept, which is the right word, painfully into the bush—and as one part of the coniferous forest which covers three-fourths of the Pacific slope from Oregon to Alaska much resembles another, the description of this portion holds fairly good of all. Among the feet of the wide-girthed trunks there lay endless fallen logs and branches piled over athwart each other in hopeless



confusion. Bracken, six feet high, grew up between, and where this failed thorny bushes took its place. Along and over these prostrate giants we clambered, clinging by the creeper-spikes upon our heels, and slipping every now and then from the mossy bark plunged through a screen of interlacing green into the pitfalls below. A suit of chain-mail would hardly withstand this kind of wear, and before long both deer-hide jackets and the skin beneath were badly rent and torn. Once Tom disappeared from view with a crash, and looking down from the surface of a tilted log I could see him floundering among the fern ten feet below. For two minutes or so he described the country graphically and vigorously, and it is a pity his remarks might not be printed for the benefit of the intending gold-seeker. The emphasis was western, but there was truth in what he said.

Presently the trees grew further apart, and here we wriggled on hands and knees among the roots of an undergrowth of willows, whose interlacing branches prohibited any other passage, until these, too, were left behind, and we emerged into a more open space where no fallen logs cumbered the ground. The rough-barked trunks stood some thirty feet apart, and between them were cinnamon-stemmed arbutus, and the wax-like clusters of the arrowhead. Then we camped for lunch—a chunk of grindstone bread which did not belie its description, helped down by a morsel of dried salmon, and it is only when one has lived for six months on salmon fresh, and salmon smoked, that the true loathsomeness of the silvery fish becomes apparent. Still there were compensations.

It was something to lie still in the heart of the primeval forest wrapped in a silence that from year's end to year's end was only broken by the howl of the wolf or the little black bear crashing through the undergrowth, among cedars that were old centuries before the first white adventurer ever crossed the Rockies. A cloud of humming birds, flashing with iridescent purple and green and gold, hovered about the snowy arrowhead blossom, and once a wood-deer slipped by like a flitting ghost. All this was very good, but it was not prospecting, and taking up our weary packs the march went on again, until towards sunset we camped beside a sparkling torrent. Dark pines and hemlocks walled it in, and the river swept out, as it were, from a tunnel beneath their spreading boughs, foamed round a curve, and leaping over a fall was

lost again in the forest. The water was filled with a run of "Steel-head" salmon, and the air vibrated with the beat of wings as endless eagles and fish-hawks circled over the shallows, whirling up the foam by a sudden plunge every now and then, to emerge with a writhing twenty-pound fish in their talons, while lines of buzzards were drawn up along the bank, and little brown minks looked on with greedy eyes.

As we finished our Spartan meal, the sun dipped, and every mighty branch stood out black as ebony against the lurid light; lines and crescents of birds lumbered away on slowly beating wings, calling harshly, and soon there was only the boom of the fall to break the stilness. Lazily smoking, we watched the afterglow fade into darkness through endless gradations of colour, and then the wild creatures of the forest awoke. Wolf answered wolf along the heights above; a loon sent its weird, unearthly cry shrilling through the shadows, and at intervals the snarl of a hunting panther rose from among the trees, until at last our eyelids closed in sleep, and another day was done.

On the following afternoon we reached the creek of the golden sand, where we had reason to believe we should find some of the precious grains at least, though it remained to be seen if the quantity would pay for the labour.

To form some idea of this and many other gold-bearing creeks on the Pacific slope, try to imagine a wide chasm some three-hundred feet deep, winding through the heart of a forest-covered ridge. The walls, for the most part, were smooth cut, and of a peculiar blue-steel lustre, speckled with grey points and streaked with milky white. At the bottom, a riband of semi-opaque green water foamed among great boulders, or slid through wastes of parti-coloured gravel, and there were transverse gullies choked with forest wreckage here and there.

To Tom's disgust and the writer's amusement, we were not alone. Thirty almond-eyed Mongolians, who had sprung from it is hard to say where, sling-poles, bags of rice, and a little joss, all complete, were already hard at work. No foot of sand was left unturned as they systematically worked up-stream, for time is of little account with a Chinaman. No man does his work more thoroughly than John, but it is beyond the power of anything on earth to hurry him.

Cranton proceeded to define the state of affairs to the leader of the

Mongolians. "See right here," he said, "it will take you two months to work up to where we begin, and we'll leave your half alone. But it will be a very cold day for the first heathen that comes near our dam."

And the Chinaman only smiled imperturbably, as he answered, "Velly good, capitan!"

The first thing we did was to erect a shelter of cedar bark, which may be stripped from the trunk in twenty-foot lengths, and then we were ready to begin. Cranton hunted about until he decided that a certain portion of the bed of the stream might be auriferous; and for five weary days we shovelled a new channel for it. It was fiercely hot; mosquitos drove us nearly mad in spite of the kerosene smeared on face and hair, and our hands were worn raw by the shovel haft, but at last the work was done. Waist-deep in a foaming rush, we cleared out the last of the barrier, and as the stream roared down its new channel, a howl of wrath rose up from the Chinamen below. The water swept through their camp, which we had stupidly forgotten, like a mill race, and the Celestials splashed wildly among the flooded tents, grabbing at their curiously contrived cooking utensils and other Eastern treasures—for the amount of miscellaneous lumber a Chinaman drags about with him is surprising. Then there was trouble, and we were interviewed by an excited mob, upon whom, however, the sight of two rifles had a calming influence, and in the end the damage was assessed and paid for.

More days of heavy labour followed, during which we waded in icy water with the fierce sun rays beating down upon our heads, the result of which combination is often shivering fits and rheumatic fever, scooping out sand and gravel, and piling it on the bank. Then we extemporised a flume of cedar bark leading from a transverse gully, a wash-box of wedge-split boards, and the "cleaning-up" began.

Slowly the sand and gravel were washed down, the crude apparatus no doubt wasting much of the gold, and the final result of a fortnight's labour was about three ounces of dull yellow grains in the bottom of a pan, at which Tom looked with disgust upon his face.

"We might have made the double of that grubbing stumps," he said.

Hard as the work was, it was by no means altogether unpleasant, and at sunset each day we went back to our cedar-bark head-

quarters, aching in every limb, but at peace with ourselves and all the rest of the world. Then after a meal which only hunger could have rendered appetising, we lounged in delicious idleness, watching the last of the afterglow fade from rose to green along the face of the far-off snows, content to be still and drink in an indefinite something from the hush of the forest.

Even Cranton, who, though he had once lived a very different life, was a man of feeble imagination, felt this, for there was no getting a word out of him at such times, and he sat with his back against a cedar, a silent statue of splendid physical manhood.

For another three weeks or so we followed a different plan, and tracing the stream upwards, washed by hand selections from the most promising patches of gravel and sand we came across. Now and then we shot a deer or blue-grouse to vary the bill of fare, and in the end had won some six ounces of gold between us. This, we decided, would not pay, and flinging the most of our outfit to the Chinamen, we turned back towards Nanaimo on our way to the mainland. As we halted for a last glance at the gorge, we saw an excited mob of Asiatics fighting over the spoil, and judging by the noise they made, someone was being killed.

Less than a year later, one man took out five-thousand dollars worth of gold from that very creek in a single month; and to-day, Alberni, which is nearest the point of supply, and then consisted of some half-dozen tumble-down frame-houses, is an important and prosperous mining centre.

Eventually, after wandering through the western half of the province, and doing many things, an account of which would not be of general interest, we found ourselves at a certain mine which lies west of the Fraser, and between Quesnelle and Lytton. That covers a wide range of country, but there are reasons why it is not desirable to particularise. Here we took a contract to convey a big dump of ore across a gully to a bridle-path by which it might be sent down to a stamp-mill, at a price which we hoped would nett us nearly two dollars a day.

Now, wheeling a heavy barrow up an incline over slippery logs is by no means as easy as it might appear, and before the end of the afternoon, the writer found it desirable to lie down and rest in the cool shade of a hemlock. He can remember that afternoon well. It was fiercely hot, and the hollow where the mouth of the adit

opened was walled in by stately hemlocks, while a group of perspiring men were busy driving piles into the bed of the stream. One individual, with a haggard face, waded knee-deep in the chilly snow-water, clearing the larger stones from beneath the iron shoes of the timbers, and there was something puzzlingly familiar about him, until at last the memory of the surroundings in which we had last met came back sharp and clear.

A good many months before, Tom and I leaned over the platform rails of a "colonist car," as a big emigrant train went lurching down the wonderful Fraser cañon. There were mighty walls of rock above, and far away below the great river swept westwards in a succession of deep black pools and roaring white-streaked rapids.

Presently a clamour of voices showed that there was trouble on hand, and entering the car we saw a big man of middle age, whom we afterwards discovered had held Her Majesty's commission, swaying unevenly on his feet in the centre of the passage-way. He held a half-empty bottle in his hand, and was apparently insisting upon the occupants accepting some loyal toast, to which a little swarthy individual who, so he said, had once been a Birmingham journalist, forcibly objected; while two citizens of the greatest republic on earth, urged him to annihilate the presumptuous Britisher. Meanwhile, a young and fragile-looking Englishwoman sat holding on to her husband's arm, in the corner of the car, and the man seemed as strangely out of place there as did his wife. Eventually blows were struck, and when one American went down full length, with the recalcitrant journalist upon him, things began to look ugly. Tom thrust his muscular form into the thick of the scuffle, and received the thick end of the bottle in his eye for a token, that here at least it is not always blessed to be a peacemaker. In the end, two brakemen, armed with iron bars, restored order, and "Captain" H— was led away to another car for safety's sake, shouting defiance to all and sundry as he went.

We had chatted with the young Englishman before, and when he afterwards joined us in the smoking end, Tom said, with his usual bluntness, "Your wife is not fit for this kind of thing. What brought you here, anyway, and what are you going to do? Perhaps we may be able to give you useful points."

The stranger told us his story simply and plainly, and we believed him because we had heard that kind of tale many times before.

He had been secretary to some municipal department at home, and engaged to be married, when turned adrift to make room for a councillor's *protégé*, and being unable to obtain any other berth, had determined to emigrate.

"Poor Flora was an orphan, and would not stay at home alone," he said, "so we were married, and sailed next day."

He had invested his scanty savings in a stock-raising venture in Alberta, but after finding himself altogether too weak for the work, and seeing most of the cattle die in a dry season, sold out, and was then on his way to Vancouver, hoping to meet with better fortune there.

We gave him the best advice we could, and a recommendation to a certain mining company we once had dealings with; and I remember Tom said quietly, as we turned away, "He'll die of pneumonia, after the first hard work in the rain, and what will become of the poor woman, I wouldn't like to say. They should never have come. God help them both!"

When the pile driving was finished for the day, and the man crawled stiffly and wearily up the bank, there was no doubt he was the same; and we went down and spoke to him together.

"You're not strong enough for that," Tom said. "Come up to our tent, and we'll talk it over."

The stranger did so; and I remember Tom looked at him very compassionately, as between fits of coughing, he told us how he had left the young wife behind in Vancouver, and sent her all he earned.

"I get a dollar and a half a day for the work," he said, "and the chief is good enough to say I would be dear at fifty cents; but it's all that lies between poor Flora and starvation."

Thereupon, Tom, who had a very kindly heart, dug his elbow into the writer's side, and answered contemplatively, "We want help badly at the ore wheeling, and if you like to take a hand in and fill the barrows, we'll see your share doesn't work out at less than two dollars a day. It will be healthier than wading in ice-water, anyway."

Poor Lee accepted the offer with fervent thanks. "I'll do my best; but I'm half afraid you are robbing yourselves," he said.

Tom's subsequent comments confirmed this view, but as he observed, "The other thing would have killed him in a month, and I can't get that woman's hopeless face out of my mind."



When we had moved all the ore, we bade farewell to Lee, who went despondently back to the pilework, and followed hurriedly on the trail of a short-handed survey party, which had passed working west towards the Bella Coola.

The whole story of that march would take too long to tell, and as the expedition subsequently failed discreditably, there is no need to add unnecessary details. Still, it may be said that these surveys are a godsend to the wandering adventurer. Every summer, the Government sends up several expeditions into the wilderness, presumably to obtain accurate topographical information; and railroad schemers, as well as capitalists on the look out for accessible timber limits, often do the same. A dozen or twenty "packers" hew a pathway through tangled forests, where even yet the foot of white man has seldom been set, or painfully clamber across the glacier-barred ranges, under a load of from fifty to eighty pounds a man; and the work is probably as hard as any done on earth. In the present instance we waded and slept for a fortnight among the melting snows of the Cascade Range, trying vainly to find a pass leading west, and then the chief called the party together. Provisions were running out, and one third of the men must find their way back as best they could, he said. We had better, therefore, draw lots or settle it some other way among ourselves. The result was that the writer and his comrade, together with two other unfortunates, were handed seven days' scanty rations, and dismissed to travel some hundred miles through a waste of choked forests before we could hope to reach the first outpost of civilization.

That was a journey to remember all one's life. We made scarcely ten miles a day for a week, often having to slash a path through matted undergrowth and fallen branches, and what that means only those who know the western forests can realise. Then it commenced to rain, and for three days we toiled on, soaked to the skin, with a handful of wet flour and about an ounce of tinned stuff as diurnal rations, and lay down at night among drenching fern. This was bad enough, but to rise in the morning, when every joint ached, and the muscles seemed to have cramped themselves into knots, and start again with nothing to eat, was considerably worse. It is perhaps a pity that many of those who intend to venture into the Yukon region, could not go through a fortnight's probation of this kind before they start to face greater privations still.



The last two days we marched absolutely without food of any kind, through the heart of a great *brulée*, where, in the long, hot summer days, a fire had gone through the bush and stripping the great trees of every branch and spray, had left them tottering on their bases, huge cylinders of charcoal. There it was necessary to proceed circumspectly and with care, for a *brulée* is a death-trap to the unwary; and to make matters worse, a fresh breeze swept through the forest, driving the rain into our faces and increasing the peril.

Once, I remember, with neither warning creak or groan, a two-hundred-foot trunk lurched sideways, and swinging earthwards, smote a fellow in its fall. A succession of thundering crashes followed, and a row of charred columns went down one after another like ninepins. After this, we went on more cautiously still, staggering from very weakness and weariness, and sinking to the ankles in sludgy, black ash, until when the writer was watching a suspiciously shivering trunk, he saw Tom seize the foremost man and fling him violently backwards. Something huge and black rushed down; we could feel the "whirr" of wind as it passed, and then the earth quivered beneath a mighty blow, and the great mass dissolved into a shapeless heap of charcoal. For the space of a few moments we stared stupidly at each other, while the echoes leapt from tree to tree, and then reeled on again into the rain.

It was now a desperate struggle to keep from falling either into sleep or insensibility on our feet, and one must experience the feeling to understand even faintly what utter exhaustion is. At length, however, just as darkness closed down on what would, in all probability, have been our last day's march on earth, we staggered out of the *brulée*, and a cluster of rain-soaked tents rose to view on the edge of the living forest. A party of free-prospectors, who were camped there, gave us of their best, with the frank generosity which characterises the race; and rolling himself thankfully in dry blankets, the writer lay down and slept for fifteen hours on end.

How we made our way back to Vancouver, and took a contract to clear land on the outskirts of that city, would take too long to tell, but one incident at least may be mentioned. For a period, we returned each night to a certain boarding hotel which had been christened "English House," though that was not the name written large above it; and there we dwelt in peace and harmony with a detachment of the "leaderless legion." They were nearly all Englishmen,

who earned considerably more than their daily bread by unloading the big Empress liners for the Canadian Pacific Railway. The omnipotent "C.P.R." in those days, at all events, treated its employees like gentlemen, and gentlemen many of them were in various senses of the word, with the result that the employees served them well.

For the most part, they seemed to be men of varied, and possibly bitter experience—barristers, one schoolmaster, an ex-clergyman, young merchant officers who had been plucked by the Board of Trade for colour-blindness, and the like. All day long they worked hard and were well paid for it, and at night donned white flannels and fine linen, and often extemporised a high-class concert of their own. There was no lack of talent; banjos, violins, and mandolines accompanied each song; and during the whole of our sojourn with them, we never heard an angry word or a grumble against the C.P.R. This may seem a somewhat unusual state of affairs, but the writer can only say that he is merely relating what he has seen. After all, it was a good life as well as an independent one, and much to be preferred to hopeless toil, or the disappointments that make the heart sick at home.

One evening the inhabitants of English House turned out *en masse* to visit a public concert, the greater portion of them, at least, faultlessly attired, and looking what they were—men who had been far too thoroughly trained in a hard school to be ashamed of the work they did. A new comer might have been surprised to hear the "Che Faro?" splendidly rendered by a man who had been a wharf labourer a week or two before; but many strange things happen on the Pacific Slope, where University graduates may often be found grubbing stumps or mowing hay. When the concert was half-way through, a young man, whose face was partly hidden by the shadow of a curtain, sang "The Message," if the writer remembers correctly, in a rich voice, which seemed curiously familiar. It was not, however, until he bowed in return to the tumultuous plaudits, that we recognised our old acquaintance, Lee, whom we had left driving piles beyond the Fraser. Making our way to the artists' room, we were cordially received, and found that the lines of the one-time mine labourer had fallen in more pleasant places. His story was simple enough. He had been sent back sick and helpless, and when able to crawl about again, had only ten dollars left in the world. Scarcely

daring to hope, he had applied for an advertised berth at the head of a certain scheme, sending in excellent testimonials for similar work done at home, and, greatly to his own astonishment, was appointed.

When we afterwards accompanied him to his pretty wooden villa, it was hard to recognise in the winsome lady who thanked us effusively for what she was pleased to term our kindness to her husband, the terrified girl we had last seen in the "colonist car." That evening was, perhaps, the most pleasant we had either of us spent in the wide Dominion; and when we left, I remember Tom bundled me hurriedly out into the darkness to escape a repetition of our hostess' thanks.

There is little more to tell; indeed, the only excuse for narrating these incidents, is that they illustrate truthfully the kind of life to be expected on the Pacific slope. Captain H——, we afterwards heard, went north with a survey party, and blundering away from the rest when crossing a range, was somehow left behind, alive or dead no one ever knew. Tom and I parted eventually on the deck of the old "Yosemite," the former going back to his lonely ranch, and the latter turning south in search of pastures new. Poor Tom! twelve months later he perished of pneumonia, contracted while working in a dripping tunnel; and the sombre forest is already closing in again across the clearing he hewed out of its heart. Trustiest and kindest of comrades, he sleeps his last sleep beneath a great Douglas fir, in a lonely gorge of the snow-crested Selkirks. May he rest in peace!

There are times still when even the scent of an English fir copse carries the writer's thoughts back over endless leagues of ocean and prairie to the boundless pine forests of the North; and closing his eyes, he can see again the great white peaks rising sheer above the lonely lakes, and hear the hoarse thunder of the misty cañons. In spite of many a hardship, that was a good life; and now and then it is hard to close one's ears to a still, small voice calling the wanderer back again.

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## The Ideal House.

By JOHN STRANGE WINTER.

IN THE MATTER OF MAKING UP ONE'S MIND.

IN bringing these papers on the Ideal House to a close, I must express a hope, that I have made it apparent to every sort and condition of reader, that the most important point, or at least one of the most important points of all to be considered in making an ideal home, is that of being able to make up one's mind, and to make it up quickly.

The mistress of the house, who never knows what to order for dinner, who never knows definitely whether to give a few pence to a beggar or to refuse it, who is never quite sure whether the "master"—that refuge of all weak-minded ladies—will approve of a certain thing or not, who cannot for the life of her decide between a blue or green gown, or between a hat or a hood for her little girl of three; who never knows whether to accept an invitation or not, is not very likely to have a home which could in any way be called ideal.

If such a lady goes to buy a new carpet for her drawing-room, she will probably yearn after one of a wholly conflicting tint to the handsome brocade curtains that were new last year, or she will wobble between a moss-green ground overspread with fern leaves of a lighter shade and a brown one garlanded with all sorts and conditions of roses. She will upset her spouse, if he has been over-persuaded to accompany her, by the inconsiderate way in which she wastes the time of the people who have to display the carpets to her, and when she has finally made her choice, and her feeble mind is almost sure that she has not done the wrong thing this time, she will have to spend another spell in determining whether she will have the carpet made with a border or to fit the room.

Poor woman and poorer man! They are both profoundly to be pitied, for the home over which such an one rules—if her characterless sway can so be called—will bear marks of her weakness and her general feebleness on every hand.

Should it be necessary to have in the sweeps, she will be torn by doubts as to whether it is the best to begin at the bottom or at the top of

the house, whether to have the chimneys all done at one fell swoop, or to let the man in black come to do each one as the room is got ready for spring cleaning. She remembers that her poor dear mother, now a saint in Paradise, where, presumably, there are no spring cleanings to be got through, used to always begin at the bottom of the house and clean upwards, because, as she said, the dirt did not get tramped up again into the rooms that had already been rendered spotless.

Her mother-in-law, on the contrary, always prefers to begin with the attics, and she locks up each one so that no soiling foot shall trespass therein until the whole house has undergone its annual renovation and presents its cleanly summer face. It is true that the old lady in question has now no family to consider, only herself and her husband being left of all her once large household, and it is also a fact that her two old servants have been with her for the better part of twenty years, so that it is an easy matter for her to lay down the strictest of rules and have them adhered to.

Our perplexed one has, perhaps, a family of six little people, all overflowing with health and spirits, several servants, who have never been and never will be twenty years in her service, or anyone else's, and a husband who strongly objects to having any of his things touched or disturbed, and who only makes remarks when his wife urges the need of cleanings, to the effect that dirt is rather picturesque than otherwise, and that he is not like his poor father, who patiently bore a martyrdom of several weeks of each year, and that spring cleaning is a very decided mistake which she had far better leave alone.

The poor soul wishes her conscience and her fear of her mother-in-law's remarks would allow her to dispense for good and all with the annual turn out of her domicile, the home which it is her constant desire and endeavour to make as nearly ideal as erring mortals, enjoying the doubtful blessings of modern servants, can ever hope to attain to; but although she is not quick at making up her mind, she is generally equally slow at taking a definite idea from somebody else, and so she embarks with fear and trembling on the perils of arranging for sweeps and other ministers of cleanliness, and then enters upon a period of cruel unrest which leaves its marks upon her in more ways than one. Poor soul! The world is full of such as she is, good, feeble, kind, weak, possibly rather pretty, certainly

humble in mind and undoubtedly extremely uncomfortable in her way of life. It is not such as this who have ideal homes: oh, no!

I believe that the mistress of the ideal home is one who is first of all able to at once make up her mind on any ordinary subject without either hesitancy or over-much trouble to herself. Of course there are some events of life, when careful and anxious thought must be taken so as to arrive as nearly as possible at the very best course to be taken under given circumstances. Even then it may be that at the last moment some new idea may occur to one or other of those whose decision is necessary, and that not second but twenty second thoughts may prove the best; but in minor matters, such as the ordering of a household, the choice of furniture, dress, and plans which cannot make any very great difference one way or another, it is always best to waste as little time over them as possible. One had better make a wrong decision than wobble about between several.

I once knew a housekeeper of the undecided kind, who would stand for half an hour arguing the respective merits of beef steak and mutton chops. Either dish would equally have suited the family, whose luncheon she was arranging, no real choice existing between the two; yet this wretched woman could not make up her mind as to which of the two she should choose, and finally ended in halving it, and proudly producing a dish on which were four mutton cutlets and a small piece of beef steak, too small to be worth calling such.

Such a woman as this is bound to have an unhappy home, or at least an uncomfortable one. If she is of that class of life which has to serve its own vegetables or carve its own meat, every meal is spoiled by the indecision which cannot make up its mind as to whether to help a leg or a wing, outside or inside cuts, under or over-done meat, this potato or that. In writing of the ideal home, I can only say, may Heaven, in its infinite mercy, preserve each and all of us from the woman who cannot make up her mind.

I wonder if you ever read a little tract called "The Oiled Feather"? If I remember rightly, it was written by a clergyman named Power, and sold in its millions. It showed what the oiled feather is capable of doing in the home of the working man; and I always thought it was a pity that the writer did not go further and show what that same means might accomplish in the homes of those higher up in the

social grade. The oiled feather does so much towards making the ideal home. The kindly word, the use of endearing terms which cost nothing—not even an effort, the ready, “Will you do so-and-so?” the pleasant, “Thank you,” which certainly never yet made a servant less capable of doing her work, the thought of and care for the likes and dislikes—nay, the fads and personal whims of others, if you will—all these little things go to constitute the oiled feather which, brought into use in daily life, makes just all the difference between an ideal home and a domestic maelström, from which young and old escape as soon and as often as they possibly can.

I have a friend who, not very long ago, took into her service a lady's maid, who had lived some years with a French lady of rank in Paris; she was rather a self-opinionated person who, having travelled a good deal with her former mistress, told strange tales. One day she said to my friend, on hearing her say “*Merci bien*” to one of her servants, “No French lady ever says ‘thank you’ to her servants.” My friend turned to her and said, “Perhaps not; but I happen to be an *English* lady, and because I live in France it is not necessary that I should degrade my manners because of what French ladies may do.”

Another way of applying the oiled feather is, as I said, in bearing in mind the fads of those with whom we live. Sometimes it is very hard to do this. It does often seem as if the entire household must go out of its way to shed all manner of strange things on the business table of the master of the house. I have, myself, been trying for fourteen years to keep my poor husband's table clear of extraneous articles; but I am as far from the ideal in that respect as I was at the beginning. You would never believe, not unless, that is, you happen to have a husband with a study table, what curious things get landed on that particular spot. Children's lesson books, toys, weird drawings like nothing in Heaven above or in the earth beneath, books from the library or the magazine club which he never reads, old newspapers, although one has indicated a special place for them over and over again, slices of bread and jam, juvenile efforts at gardening; and even the mistress may put down the hat she is trimming or the bit of embroidery she is stitching, and may go away and forget it, so that it will add one more thing to the eyesores which will greet him on his return home. Why, why is it that every member of a household does seem instinctively to drop



all their rubbish down on the master's table? Yet most masters will bear me out that it is a true and melancholy fact.

One of my own trials in this way is used matches! I don't know of anything that annoys me so intensely, or of anything which gives a house such an air of desolation, such—well, such a pot-house sort of look, as to see burnt matches dropped about, here, there and everywhere. It is a minor trial, of course, not worth speaking of in comparison with such things as health and happiness; but it is a very present trial in some women's lives, and when I feel the little pin-prick of a burnt match on the stairs or on my polished drawing-room floor, I confess I think tenderly of the husband's table.

But, little mistress of the house ideal, don't go to the other extreme in applying the oiled feather, and make even the husband's study table a battle ground. In attaining the ideal house or life, there must always be a great deal of give and take, and the oiled feather must be applied to every part with equal diligence. Let it not on any account be all give and no take; for that is as fatal a mistake as to go in for all take and no give. Especially is this the case in the up-bringing of children. The mother who sacrifices herself to her children, who sinks herself in them and lives only for them, is as bad a mother, every whit, as the one who leaves them to drag themselves up as best they can and goes on her way entirely indifferent to what becomes of them.

A house can never be an ideal one if its mistress is a house-wife first and a human being afterwards. I know one beautiful house, a palace of a place, whose mistress never sits still for one single moment—not even when she is entertaining visitors. She never reads anything, not even a newspaper, for she never has time. It is true she administers her husband's money most carefully, certainly making every farthing fetch its full value; but this has been attained by such a series of the process which we call “having an eye to the main chance,” that the ideal wife has been entirely lost in the practical housekeeper.

How delightful such a wife would be if she had sufficient discernment to have stopped half way, and so to have combined her house-wifely qualities with others of less practical portent! But alas; once embarked on a certain road, how difficult it is to check oneself in any career.

Girls who marry should think of this, that the lynch-pin of the

ideal home—nay, of any home—is its mistress. She may be neither pretty, nor clever, she may not be rich or accomplished: but she should have a good heart, a sound notion of common sense, great tact, an unselfish nature, and a proper sense of what is due to herself as her husband's wife and as a mistress of his house. It is such a mistress as this who presides over the Ideal House.

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## Too Late.

IN TWO PARTS.

By C. E. C. WEIGALL.

Author of "THE TEMPTATION OF DULCE CARRUTHERS, etc., etc.,

### PART I.—CHAPTER I.

THE long line of moorland and heather sloped to the sea.

It was very cold and bleak on Laneborough Moor, and the people who were bred there, were not creatures of impulse and passion, to be wafted on every breeze of heaven that blew, but sturdy independent folk, sure of themselves and their own purpose, and original to a fault.

It was a tiny village, so small that the houses could be numbered on the fingers of one hand. And so proud, that it was often said that if a Laneborough man was starving, it would take the devil and all, to make him take one crust from his neighbour.

The curlews arrowed along the shallow drift of heather and tufted gorse that made the plateau above the hamlet. And the black cock chuckled as he drifted home across the clumps of moss green bracken with their crisp fronds breaking through the peaty earth that formed his home. For the wild creatures had the Moor to themselves, to live and to die in—to breed and to love in.

And they seemed to resent the presence of any human being there, as a personal insult to themselves. Save only the presence of one young thing, lying in the grass, with her face pressed into the earth, her arms outspread, as if to embrace nature itself.

There was a large stag beetle moving inquisitively at her feet, and another in the grass at her head. And all about her the bees were buzzing in the purple heather-bells, dragging their golden honey-laden thighs upwards, with a quiver of thankfulness, when their sweet labour was done

The crow of a grouse came suddenly over her head, and Kirsteen Armstrong sat up, with an impatient shiver.

She had been lying there since early morn, when the grey mist of dew upon the plains made the landscape below her mysterious as the scene in a sylvan play.

But now the glory of the noon was about her, with the blue of the summer sky, and the eternal freshness of the June wind that blows across the Yorkshire Moors.

When she lifted her face, and pushed back her wealth of auburn hair, her beauty became one of the most perfect things about her.

She was healthily brown in colour, and where the sun had kissed her warmly, her cheeks were pink as one of the hedge roses.

Her great dark eyes, under their fringe of black lashes, as long and as black as night, looked out at the world with a half defiant expression of unrest, which was repeated in her lips—red as coral, and perfect in their curve as a Cupid's bow.

The wonderful oval of her face was as delicate as a portrait by Greuze. And her figure, in its faintly swelling beauty, was as suggestive as a summer night when the world is young.

Her dress was common and worn,—some material of blue homespun, which had seen its best days and had already faded into that state beyond shabbiness, which is almost piteous. But it fitted her closely, and in the manner of its draping, showed what the capabilities of her form would be under happier conditions.

She shook her slim hand up at the cloudless sky.

"How can I believe that there is a God," she cried passionately "when I am so unhappy, so utterly miserable? Was I born into the world for this, and given all my boundless capacities for enjoyment, which have never been gratified, and, ah me! never will be."

Her speech was the outcome of many weary hours of thought, of life in a strict Presbyterian school, and of a stricter life at home. And when she had spoken, she cowered down once again into the moss, as though she were afraid that God would strike her for that rank blasphemy, the unheard witness to her future perdition.

For was she not the daughter of a local preacher, a modern Daniel, whose dissent was grounded in absolute faith, and whose narrowness was the outward and visible sign of the path of perfection in which he trod so fearlessly?

Her heresy was too appalling, too soul-stirring to contemplate unmoved, and she shivered, and covered her ears with her slender hands, as though the trump of the last day were about to strike her with its helpless, hopeless blast.

Life was so impossibly black just then, for the girl of twenty, whose passionate nature was quivering with all the possibilities of what life might contain for her.

She had compared her lot with that of her school-fellows, who had gone out from the red brick school building, in one of the prim side streets of the city of York, to their new lives at home. They were most of them of the grade which is represented by retired tradesmen, and small country solicitors. And among them, she was of the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. For Miss Fox's Establishment was very genteel, and though none of the fifty young ladies knew it, Abel Armstrong earned his daily bread by mending boots and shoes, and saved his soul by wrestling with the souls of the folk who wore them out.

Miss Fox had spent her hardy earned summer holiday in a farmhouse at Laneborough, where she vegetated on the Moors, weary with drumming the rudiments of learning into fifty troublesome young women.

And one day on the wide heather, she had heard Kirsteen Armstrong sing with that marvellous voice of hers, which had had the little training that the village organist could supply.

And the mellow notes of that golden organ of hers, had thrilled through the sordid little soul of Maria Fox, and inspired her with the ambition to train another Patti, and so cover herself with glory.

And so she had offered the girl a free education at Leslie House, in return for her services as singing mistress, and her performances as a show pupil at the breaking-up entertainments.

The scheme had vanished into thin air, after the first breeze that Miss Fox and Kirsteen had had together, and which occurred after the girl had been for three years in York.

The storm had broken after the pent-up grudges of many months. For the grimy professor, who taught her the theory of voice

production, had become ambitious to teach Kirsteen yet another art. And Professor Heller was Miss Maria's pet admirer, and last hope.

And so in a fury of rage, the girl had given up her life's work, and all her half-formed ambitions, and had come home to the poor hamlet, scoffing at the pretensions of the professor, and rigid in her own pride and self-righteousness, which was not bounded by any idea of life in a German pension, on twopence a day, and sauerkraut, week in, week out.

She had not found life in the poor hamlet where Abel Armstrong made life a blacker thing than it is by nature, very inviting. For his tenets forbade ambition with its train of consequent evil. And he gave her only a cold greeting, a crust of bread and a place at the table where she might sew the uppers of the shoes to earn her living.

"Why did you not marry the man, when he cared for you?" he said, when she first told him of the professor's pretensions. "At any rate he could have given you clothes for your back and bread to eat. And it is difficult to get either here in this place."

"I did not love him, and besides that, I know that I can do better," she answered, with a toss of her beautiful head. "Do you think that I am going to waste my looks and my voice upon a smoke-dried German professor? I am not happy here, but I would far rather be here than in Munich with old Heller and his black wig!"

And because he scented the root and branch of discontent in her voice, Armstrong besought the elders of the chapel on the following Lord's Day, to wrestle with her soul in prayer, for she was unconverted and unregenerated.

And while the droning voice of the circuit preacher, filled the white-washed barn, with the list of her iniquities, she sat with her handsome head thrown scornfully back, and the scarlet ribbon at her throat, which was such an eyesore and a stumbling block to the frequenters of the Bethel, no redder than her angry cheeks.

But till that morning she had been silent and enduring.

And perhaps she would never have risen above the dead level of resignation, had not her school friend, Amy Rose, sent her that day a piece of her wedding cake, with one of those impetuous letters that a girl in love will write.

Her husband was so beautiful and charming, and the life she was going to lead in the pretty house, with the Japanese fans, and the

painted tiles, so perfect, that the heart of Kirsteen swelled with restless desire.

Her silk wedding gown and the gold brooch he had given her, set Kirsteen's quick passions aflame, as she thought of them.

Why had these joys been denied to her? She, who was a year older, and a hundred times better looking than Amy, whose principal pleasure at school had been to eat herself sick with toffee.

Kirsteen's infinite capacity for joy and passion was the mainspring of her life. And she knew that pale-faced Amy Rose would give milk-and-water kisses, and be perfectly happy if she could have preserved fruits every day for dinner, without reckoning in the well-being of her husband or the satisfying of his ideal of womanhood.

Her father's creed of self-repression held no charms for Kirsteen. For if every soul born into the world has to suffer in some form or another, why had she ever been born?

No one had consulted her as to her wishes on the subject. And the unfairness of the compulsory suffering of human nature, struck her with a keen sense of injustice, which was the beginning of her rebellion against the universe.

The fresh mountain breeze blew her hair into a tangle of rebellious curls, like a golden mesh of sunlight, and she began to realise that she was hungry. For she had eaten nothing since the night before, since she had refused to stitch any more of the uppers of these horrible shoes with that sharp stiletto that hurt her tender flesh so cruelly. And in Armstrong's house, if a woman would not work, neither should she eat.

Her full lips quivered like a child's on the edge of tears. Her eyes were exquisite, dimmed by the mist of tears, under her heavy lashes that held the drops like dew upon a thorn bush.

Her slim neck, with its dimpled curves, white as snow where the wind and sun had not tanned it, showed above the half opened collar of her woollen gown, quivering like the throat of a nightingale, over-come in song.

The witching glory of the June light was upon her, and its enchantment brought her to her knees among the bracken.

She knelt there, looking eagerly southwards across the hills, where it was possible to live one's life at racing heat, and not vegetate like a sea anemone in a rock pool.

Live! How much life meant to her, with all the passionate power of her pulses throbbing within her.

Amy Rose had been a pettish, silly little doll, whose smattering of education was as shallow as her mind, and she had married a well-to-do young doctor, who quite thought of buying a practice in one of the London suburbs, since he had treated Lady Harford's case so brilliantly, and made a name for himself.

And she, Kirsteen, was despised—alone—by an accident of birth! But she possessed one talent which the whole school had envied. She could sing. Her voice, in the dreary white-washed meeting house, only last Sunday, had made the elders look at her half reprovingly. For who had ever heard "Jerusalem," sung with such worldly passion? God! if they had but known, that while her voice had been framing the tune of the most popular of chapel hymns, her tongue had been declaiming the words of the "Creole Love Song;" living them through in heart and desire, in spite of her surroundings and her companions. She had sat there demurely enough, in her plain frock, and her black hat, outwardly pious as the rest of the flock of the chapel, but within, she was away on the wide plains of the west, with the wind upon her brow, and the soft glamour of the night, bearing her and her Creole lover away upon the wings and the passion of the night. She began to frame a note or two—now—tremulously in the stillness; for the chirp of the grasshopper in the fresh heather, and the twitter of the lark as she dropped home on to her nest, made the silence only the more profound.

Behind her, the shadows were playing upon a broken edge of stone wall, that bordered a half-filled quarry, ivy-coloured. And before her, the sunlit plain lay quivering in the heat, flecked with glittering cornfields, and long furrows of scented hay. Her first notes were as tremulous as the first song of the lark, before he has shaken off the dew of the summer night from his brown wings.

#### KIRSTEEN'S SONG.

"There was a sigh in the sedge,  
Where the wild birds nested at noon:  
There was a bud in the hedge  
Of wild roses, that withered in June.  
There was a note in the song of the lark,  
That quivered and died out into the dark,  
Of that still, dead night in June.



God! where the rose petals fall,  
And the song of the brown lark dies,  
I have heard life's misery call  
As the sun died out of the skies.  
But when Love looked out of his prison bars,  
And soared to the height of the pitying stars,  
I followed him into the skies."

"By Jove! What a voice. Are you aware, you little lonely bird, what a treasure you have in that brown throat of yours?"

Kirsteen sprang to her feet, with a stifled shriek, and stood poised, as if to fly, with her shapely head thrown back, her heart throbbing under her light bodice. A young man was standing behind her. He must have come up unnoticed, while she was singing, across the soft ling.

He was very handsome, tall and broad-shouldered, and his dark cynical face was looking up at her, with a gleam of surprised contempt in his sombre eyes, that she resented at once.

"I can sing, though you seem to think that I can do nothing else I have been told so often, by other people than you."

He looked at her, with a sudden look of amusement, appraising the beauty of her figure, and the quiver of her exquisite lips.

"Yes, you can sing, God's truth, you can sing!" he said slowly: "And you are a beautiful child, as beautiful as a dream."

He put out his hand and took hers. Slowly touching her arm, from finger to shoulder.

"Yes, you are a very beautiful woman," he repeated: "Why are you here?"

"Because God is cruel, because I am miserable, she cried passionately.

"Are you?" he said, slowly drawing a little closer to her; "Are you miserable? Can I help you?"

The lark twittered down to her nest, and the light died down on the hills.

And still Kirsteen Armstrong stood there, with the yellow sun upon her hair, and the stranger's hand about her waist

There was a future for her after all!

## CHAPTER II.

It was grey evening before Kirsteen went home again, alone. She walked down the slope, with her head held high, and her face full of an exaltation, which is born of fanaticism, wrapped to a higher heaven. The springy heather under her feet, the fresh breeze that had sprung up with the first crimson in the west, the chiming of a lonely church-bell ringing for evensong somewhere among the Moors, were all part of her dream. And she heard them from the height of her intense self-exaltation.

The hamlet of Laneborough was built on either side of a rough cart track, that wound away through the valley. Two or three little farmsteads of a more imposing nature, nestled higher up on the hill. And their sheep and cows, feeding on the fresh grass, were dotted about like patches of snow.

But the most part of the houses were very small, and built of grey blocks of stone, which were beautified by the lichen and houseleek that wantoned at their own free will, upon the thatched roofs.

Her resolute step sounded on the rough path, as she came up between the cottage doors across the bridge that spanned the trout stream at that point, to face her father.

She gave a curt good evening to the few neighbours that she met, for she was not popular in Laneborough. And she regarded her stolid contented countrymen with contemptuous indifference.

The brown stream flowed past the Armstrongs' door. And lower down the valley among the alder bushes, the speckled trout danced among the stones, and sometimes a salmon came up with the spate, and floundered in a shallow pool, till he was speared and brought home in triumph. From the low roof of the Armstrongs' kitchen, trophies of successful spearing were evident, in the flakes of dried salmon that hung from the bacon hooks, acquiring a more pungent flavour every day from the wreaths of peat smoke on the hearth.

Kirsteen opened the door of her home, and went in.

Armstrong was mending a shoe, by the light of a lamp composed of a strip of wick, in a saucer of oil. And between the tap of the hammer, he was singing in his nasal voice, the verse of one of his favourite hymns.

"The Lord looked up, the Lord looked down,  
Upon the world with many a frown,  
For He did not behold they say,  
One pious Christian pass His way."

"And so you've come home, Kirstie, at last. No supper, my girl, till your day's work is done. For there's a power of chastening, as your nature is in need of. Sit you down here."

He pointed to a chair by the table. But Kirsteen stood defiantly in the doorway, with her hand gripping the jamb, her face on fire with her purpose.

"I am not going to work at cobbling any more, father," she said clearly. "On the Moors to-day, one of the great gentlemen who have to do with the London operas, heard me sing, and he says that if I will go with him, I shall make my fortune. And I am going with him."

Her defiant young voice rang through the room, and echoed in the rafters, and woke the little terrier by the fireplace, Kirsteen's pet, which rising, with a little bark of joyful recognition ran to meet her. Mrs. Armstrong had been dead for five years. And the memory of her as a fragile uncomplaining woman, of gentler birth than her husband, and overborne by his tyranny, supported Kirsteen at that moment.

Abel Armstrong laid down his tools, and spat deliberately on the floor. He was a tall lean man, with a lantern-jawed face, and eyes sunk deep in his head. But in those eyes, a latent fire was burning, which on rare occasions blazed up in a fury of white passion. He leaned one hand upon the table, and stooping forward, looked into the girl's face with concentrated hatred.

"Dost mean it, lass? Art thee going to perdition like the rest of the singing world? Then I wish thee had been born dumb."

"Mean it?" cried Kirsteen. "Do you think that I will stay here, in this sordid, miserable hole, poor as a rat, content to go to chapel once a week for an outing, and pleased if the minister speaks to me along the road? Do you think I care for shoe-making, or for the fishing? Do you think that all these weeks, since I left school, I have not been eating out my very heart, with desire to get away and see the world, and sing to the people who can listen to me and appreciate me?"

Her face was quivering with excitement, and the hard face of the preacher opposite, waxed more stern.

He was standing there, with the flicker of the light upon his shabby figure, distorting his face into a hundred weird expressions, as the flame leaped higher in the saucer.

As Kirsteen spoke, he reached out his hand, and took the Bible

from the shelf above his head. He opened it in silence, and turned the leaves with his knotted sinewy fingers.

A strange silence had fallen on the evening calm, and it seemed to be intensified by the motionless figure of the girl by the door, shivering in her wonder and terror.

When Abel had found the place for which he was seeking, he pushed the brown volume nearer to the light, and cleared his throat. An ember from the peat fire on the hearth, fell out with a little crash. And the Grandfather's clock, resonantly ticking out the minutes in its huge case, faltered in its stride as though the heavy metal works were protesting against the unnatural scene.

"Let us pray. Hear us, oh Jehovah, Lord of thunders, for as Thou hast said in holy writ, in Thy blessed book of Deuteronomy: Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother, so may this woman now before Thee be cursed when she comes in, and cursed when she goes out, and in her trouble may the heaven over her head be brass, and the earth under her be iron, and may she grope in darkness where there is no light—as the blind grope at midday—and may she not prosper in her ways till she turn and come back, and may she be smitten with a consumption and a fever—and——"

Kirsteen stirred, her pulses, throbbing with her emotion, seemed to wake her whole being into life.

She had never given her father any affection. But his curses seemed to be driving her to the verge of frenzy. And if she were to hear another word from him in his mad fanaticism—she realized that it would turn her from her purpose.

And in her horror, she broke into singing, her voice sharp with the tension of her agony.

"Love at the dawning—  
The shrill cock crew,  
And I saw in the darkness,  
The path we knew.

Where the throstle piped on the white May tree,  
Green and inviting—for you and me."

"Cursed may she be in her life and in her death—if she holds to this purpose of play-acting—which is contrary to all the teachings of Thy Holy writ. And may the shadow of misery never leave her till she returns to the paths of peace and religion."

Armstrong raised his voice—afraid lest its sharp accents should not reach his daughter—“and so save her soul alive.”

“And as at the gloaming—  
You sighed to me—  
Before the thrush woke,  
On the orchard tree—

“Oh father—father—”

She broke off with a shrill sob—and made one step forward into the darkening room.

But Abel—strong in his righteousness—looked up.

Her marvellous beauty—and the hair that glittered round her head like the aureole of a saint in a stained window—smote him with fear lest she should witch him from his purpose—by touching his heart with something like softness.

And he averted his eyes and waved her back.

“Woman—I will not look upon you—” he said: “Your beauty is a snare to mankind—I never thought to curse the day that you were born. There is yet time to repent and turn to righteousness again.”

“Righteousness—” Ah God, that meant shoemaking and psalm singing, and the narrow life of Laneborough. And she stifled a sob.

Out on the bridge above the brown torrent, Henry Fane was waiting for her impatiently. She could hear him whistling a scrap of Carmen, as he stood—and the aria stirred her with its melody.

They could just catch the night express to London if they made great haste, and to-morrow she would begin her training under the great musician whose name was one to conjure with.

And she hurried across the path, where the woodbine clung—and Abel shut the door behind her.

*(To be continued.)*

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## **The Old Bridge.**

By The Rev. J. HUDSON, M.A.

I stand upon the bridge once more,  
As oft-times I have stood before  
In the dear, different days of yore!

Beneath, the crystal current glides,  
And troutlets dart with gleaming sides;  
The cony in its covert hides.

The sky—one blaze of sapphire sheen—  
Smiles on the little vale serene.  
Why are things not as they have been?

The village bears its olden name,  
The valley keeps its ancient fame;  
All is the same—yet not the same!

I know not what has come to me,  
'Tis only in my dreams I see  
Things seeming as they used to be

'Tis not alone that I can trace  
Time's branding touch, whose blows efface  
The earlier charm, the olden grace.

For Time restores the wrecks of old,  
And hides with touches manifold  
Each ragged rent with green and gold,

And binds each wound with velvet moss  
And ferns and lichens creep across,  
And every storm-dealt scar emboss.

While soft, caressing ivies climb,  
Till Beauty—killed by Time—in time  
Repairs the splendour of its prime.

No ! Nature's charms unchanged remain,  
'Tis we and ours who change ! In vain  
We seek the perished past again !

For friends grow old, and some have sped  
To distant lands, and some are dead  
And lie in yonder churchyard bed !

And life glides on for weal or woe,  
As this swift current glides below,  
And none may tarry—all must go !

The sky—one blaze of sapphire sheen—  
Smiles on the little vale serene,  
Yet things are not as they have been !

So, reverie-wrapt; I stand and dream  
Upon the bridge, whose beauties seem  
The crowning glory of the stream.

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## **The Art of Letting Lodgings.**

By EDWIN WOOTON.

It may be safely affirmed that no one but an imbecile ever let lodgings from motives purely philanthropical, and that no one but an imbecile suffering from an intensified kind of imbecility ever let them for amusement.

As you read this journal, your mental condition is above criticism, and it may be assumed that any lodging-letting on your part will be a means to that one end at which all civilised humanity is striving—personal pecuniary gain.

From this it follows that the lodger, actual or prospective, is your natural foe. He enters your house for his own convenience, not to add to your pleasure. His very presence is an affirmation of your necessity. As a British female you resent this outrage on your feelings ; and you will be justified in exacting a vengeance, pecuniary and otherwise.



You will observe, dear landlady, that the lodger has been given the masculine gender, for the good reason that if you are wise you will not let your rooms to one whose gender is feminine. Your sex is a sweet one, quite fascinating and adorable, but it has the subtlety of Eden's serpent, and the vindictiveness of a hungry cat. Take in males, dear landlady, you will find them harmless and helpless.

It may be premised that the rooms are furnished. If they are not your lodger will import a wife or a sister or a charwoman, in any case—a "creature" whom you will not be able to "abear."

COALS.—On the coals supplied, two or three hundred per cent. profit should be realized. With such a righteous end in view, place first in the scuttle three or four large knobs—the larger the better. Over this throw lightly one or two scoopfuls of large knobby coal. The scuttle so filled contains about one halfpennyworth of fuel. As you will be paid sixpence there will be a margin of profit. This last may be increased by a slight morning task. When attending to the fires have a dustpan handy. In this place a couple of scoops of coal, and remove to your own room. Before doing so carefully throw on the fire all the cinders—unless they are worth taking away. Pile on the fire all the little bits of charred wood and unburnable ashes that can be scraped together. This should impress the lodger with your scrupulous honesty. In the event of his remarking that the coals seem to go very quickly, reply in a manner, half offended, half pitying, that they are the best that can be bought, and burn out quickly because they *are* the best, and that it really doesn't pay you to let him have them at sixpence a scuttle. This will either shut him up at once, or cause him to say that he doesn't wish to rob you: in the latter case you will be enabled to add a few more pence to your hardly earned income.

Some landladies think it a good plan to supply the lodger with the cheapest coals procurable. The system never works satisfactorily, as the coals don't burn properly, and if, when complaints commence you declare the coals are the best that can be bought, your lodger may be goaded into saying that he wishes you would supply him with the worst: a state of rebellion very dangerous to your authority.

THE BATH.—Of all the means by which the lodger takes despicable advantage of that necessity of his landlady which compels her to endure his presence in her house, the bath deserves severest condemnation. Consider for a moment your own reasonable requirements in

personal ablution, and compare them with those of your residential nuisance, when you will perceive how totally unnecessary is his perpetual dabbling in water.

Every morning, estimable landlady, you dress yourself until all save your neck, face, and arms is covered. Then you pour a little water into the handbasin, soap a piece of flannel and apply it to your fair person. After this you dip the flannel or towel-corner in the water, and try to wash the soap off and some of the dirt. What doesn't come off is rubbed in with the towel. But your unreasonable lodger is not happy unless he has a hip bath, two cans of water and a sponge. Observe, therefore, what a snare the bath is. It means more towels, more "up an' down them stairs," and, in brief, more "noosance."

Seek revenge. These bath lovers superstitiously dislike bathing in an infusion of dust and feathers. Consequently you will take good care not to wipe out the bath before pouring the water into it. You will occasionally forget that your lodger requires more than one small can of water, which quantity when spread over the bottom of the bath will be about three-fourths of an inch deep, and cannot be indulged in with much enjoyment without the aid of a teaspoon.

An excellent plan, one well tried and proved successful, is to have a "bath-room" in the house. You will, with a smile, inform the applicant for apartments of this fact. He, gratified, will smile responsively, agree to your terms, and walk away with his brain full of visions of luxury. On the morning after his arrival he will rise early, bent on enjoyment, and will make for the bath-room, a happy light in his eyes, but which will fade as he observes—a nineteenth century sarcophagus in which are buried a slop pail, some odd pieces of soap, a thick layer of dirt, and some evil smelling wet cloths.

Should he subsequently inform you sarcastically that he is glad to find you have a museum in the house, say with dignity—"The room requires looking to, and the plumbers are coming in." You may keep the plumbers "coming in" for a month, then have the bath-room cleared and half cleaned, and inform your persecutor it is quite ready for his use. Delighted with the information he will proceed there, and putting up with the tomb-like smell peculiar to the place, will turn the cold water tap. After a few minutes waiting he may conclude that it will be best to leave the tap turned, and to come for his bath some time next day; or he may go for the hot water tap,

and from the result will incline to the opinion that the inscription over, under, or upon it, is an adjectived lie.

**SMOKING.**—This reprehensible habit affords an excellent means of bringing your lodger in all humility to your feet. You will smell anxiously for the first odour of the burning weed. Having detected it, pass the doorway whence it issues, and as you do so cough in a repressed manner as if half stifled. Then sniff three or four times, audibly. Next go to the nearest landing window and throw it up with as much noise as possible. If the smoking continues, pull the window down with a bang. Whatever you do make no direct complaint as that might provoke hostilities; and open war is not your object, but the growth and maintenance of your authority, which will be best brought about by stratagem. Should your lodger inquire sympathetically whether the smoke annoys you, reply evasively that you have a delicate chest, and that no one else smokes in the house. Then retire coughing from the room. If your lodger is one of the hardened and desperate beings who assert their right to do as they like, within the limits of the law, in the rooms for which they pay, do not press the attack or you will score heavily on the losing side. Should he prove unused to lodging-house warfare, and of a considerate nature, evidenced by the fact of his smoking somewhat less, you will proceed to call to your aid the hypothetical sensitiveness and anti-tobacco tendencies of other real or imaginary lodgers. Suggest that he pay your romantic backyard a visit; or ask him why he doesn't walk "down the street" or "round the square," or anywhere else which only a demoralised lunatic would prefer to his own sitting-room. If your lodger is goaded into saying that your square, back-yard, other lodgers, and fair self may go to Hades before he will give up his indoor pipe, withdraw from the position, and subsequently remark to him: "The other lodgers are a nuisance," and "gentlemen must be allowed to do as they like in their own rooms." But in the event of your lodger yielding the point and ceasing to smoke indoors your triumph is assured. You will be able to advance your claims on his obedience until the hour of his retiring, and that of his rising, his taste in neckties and religious belief shall be governed by yourself.

**BED ROOM DUTIES.**—An attempt should be made to attend to these either before the lodger leaves his room in the morning, or just as he has entered it for the purpose of washing his hands. If he be out

during the day, and return at say five in the afternoon, that hour will suit admirably.

The effect will be enhanced by the servant being engaged in his sitting-room cleaning the windows, and by steps, cloths, and dirty water meeting his gaze as he enters. If he is engaged at home now and again during the day, seize the occasion to turn one or other of his rooms topsy-turvy: so that, assuming the chamber under improvement to be that in which he sleeps, he shall find it in the following æsthetic condition:—The carpet up, tea leaves covering the floor, the wash-hand jug empty and standing on the drawers, the looking-glass lying on the bed, the chairs piled one on another, and the towels mixed up with the tea leaves.

**BEER CASK LEAKING.**—If your lodger has his beer in by the cask he will probably keep the key, and send it down when he requires some of the contents of the cask. When the beer has been in about a couple of days mention incidentally that the tap leaks dreadfully. You may then draw off, say a gallon, and bottle it. After another two days or so, go to your lodger with a face full of consternation and tell him the tap got loose, the beer ran out and flooded the back kitchen, and spoilt a heap of carpets you had placed there. Say it is a dreadful nuisance; look injured, and even if he doesn't rise to paying for the imaginary damage, he will be silenced as to the loss of the beer.

**COOKERY.**—This is a great art, my dear landlady. Whether you keep a boarding or a lodging-house its study will repay you. Here a few hints must suffice.

Take the largest pie-dish in the kitchen, and nearly fill it with batter, which need not be too rich and bilious. Then get half a pound of scrag end of neck of mutton; cut it up into little knobs, and mix judiciously into the contents of the dish, so that when cooked there shall be a fair chance of one knob coming out in each plateful of batter. Call the thing a "Toad in the hole," and bake until it is sufficiently hard to distract the diner's attention from a vain search after the toad.

**LANDLADIES' PIE.**—Take half a pound of rump steak from that sent in by the dining-room people, three eggs from the chiffonier of the drawing-room lodger, as much flour as you can from the stock of your second-floor tenant. Flavour with anything you fancy, provided it belongs to someone else, and make when it is unlikely that any

unreasonable lodger will come downstairs to enquire into circumstances.

Just a word as to furnishing. You will find it advantageous for every sitting-room to have an article that has the outward appearance of a piano. This you will keep locked. The fact of its being locked is suggestive of a high class children-musn't-touch-it instrument. The prospect of future musical joys will be created in the breast of the homeless wanderer when his gaze rests upon your possession. He may enquire whether its use will involve any extra charge. In this case an exhibition of generosity on your part will secure a new lodger. When he has entered and the case has been unlocked, and he has sampled the joys anticipated, he will probably prefer cold silence. Should he remark that with a new inside the piano might be worth playing, retort that "the last lodger played it beautiful." Having uttered this reproach, you may leave your new tenant to mentally debate the point whether "the last lodger" worked miracles, or used up all the play that was left.

Of the chair with three creaky legs, and one past creakyness, that stands against the wall, and when pulled forth and sat upon collapses: of the valuable Dresden china ornament that belonged to your own mother's great aunt, and that you wouldn't have had broken for 'anythink'—not even for the sixpence you paid for it: of the chimney that "never smoked before"—much might be said. Let it be unsaid. *Festina lente* is a good motto for you, dear landlady, especially when called on to hurry.

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## Miss Lydia's Predicament.

By HESTER WHITE.

He was forty-seven and she thirty-five. An old maid—some would have called her—with a sweet face which looked girlish when she smiled, but showed lines of care and was sad when in repose.

She had gone to Paris to meet a friend who was returning from India. The friend had delayed her arrival, so finding herself there, and having a certain affection for that fair city, she had remained. She sat next him at table d'hôte in the *pension*. They had become friends; first as companions in misfortune (for his plans had also depended on other people and had been disturbed by them) then through a certain affinity. She was a sympathetic listener and her sympathy was unselfish and impersonal.

Ardent spirits in the place sometimes made up parties. To picnic at St. Germain, to dine at St. Cloud, returning home by moonlight; or to take the boat in the opposite direction, gliding swiftly beyond the Ile St. Louis, past the silent Morgue; until the dark old river with its golden reflections, became a dream of mystery, and the vulgar, bustling little steamer like to Charon's dusky barge bearing its passengers into the unknown.

There are many innocent pleasures of this description to be obtained during spring weather in gay and wicked Paris, and on these occasions somehow, Lydia Browne and Edward Maunsell generally drifted together, apparently without being conscious of the fact. They had grown used to each other, that was all, and understood each other without the necessity for speech. Once when ill she did not come down to meals for a week, and was surprised at the gladness that suddenly transformed his quiet intellectual face when he caught sight of her. It startled her a little, for it touched some hidden chord, and called forth a responsive glance and blush.

When she reached her room that evening, she stood for a time on the balcony, gazing across to a faint blue line of distance. Beyond the dark housetops and chimneys on the right, gleamed the yellow evening light; yellower and brighter in Paris, somehow, than anywhere else, she thought.

"What a jolly old idiot I am," she exclaimed under her breath, reverting involuntarily to a slang vocabulary of her youth, learnt from schoolboy brothers.

After that, he changed to her. He grew silent, their pleasant intercourse ceased, a constraint sprang up between them. She wondered at it, was sure it must be her fault, and strove in vain to regain the old footing.

At last one night he told her he was going away, but might return in a week's time, yet might not. He wanted to see some friends who were coming to the *pension*, was worried about something, he could not tell her what, for he did not understand himself.

She answered nothing, and did not even find words to say she was sorry and should miss him. She guessed he would probably not wish her good-bye and was right. The next night his place was filled by a pretty flashy American woman from "way down west," who evidently thought it necessary to wear all her diamonds at table d'hôte.

Lydia felt like one in a dream, and was conscious that something had gone out of her life. She listened amiably to her neighbour's discourse on the superior position of women in America, but had not the energy to argue the point, or even to suggest that it was difficult—under such circumstances—to comprehend why Yankee ladies appear to consider English husbands desirable.

There was a good deal of coming and going in this busy French *pension*, new faces were to be seen every day; she watched them without much interest; some were vulgar, some grotesque, some pathetic. A mother with a pretty daughter sat opposite, out of reach; the girl attracted her, she was about twenty-four, and had a happy, merry English face and large soft grey eyes, which changed with every mood. A pleasant face to look at when feeling weary and sad, Lydia thought.

"Monsieur Maincelle has returned," the chambermaid remarked one evening, "He has been all day with ces dames, of number twenty-three." They had shopped; many "cartons" from the Louvre and Bon Marché had arrived; one was missing, had Mademoiselle seen it? Ah, here was a note for Mademoiselle, the concierge had given it her.

Lydia's heart began to beat quickly.

"Miss L. Browne." It was his writing.

When alone she opened it, in it he asked her to be his wife. He



wrote because he could never catch her alone, he said ; then told her candidly that he had gone away to make sure of his own feelings. He felt it was demanding too much, being a weary, disappointed man who had thought the sunshine of life gone past recall. Absence had shown him his heart; he loved her, could not live without her, etc., etc.

Lydia buried her face in her arms on the table, and so remained for some time ; a thousand emotions and thoughts surged in her brain, great happiness made her dizzy. Yes, she loved him, she knew it now ; not perhaps as she had loved in her girlhood, but with an affection very strong and real, tender as St. Martin's summer, which comes all unlooked-for to gladden grey autumn's days.

"God is good," she said, and youth and joy flashed into her face, making it beautiful.

Should she write to him ? What could she say, it was so difficult to write ; yet how meet him first, beneath the gaze of a hundred prying eyes ?

A knock, Marie interrupted again.

Had Mademoiselle indeed not seen the box from the Bon Marché, appertaining to ces dames of twenty-three ?

"But why should I be the culprit Marie, have you looked in Miss Carter's room ?"

"Mais c'est tout simple, Mademoiselle, for the reason that Mademoiselle has the same name ; Miss Leytonne Browne is the demoiselle who is the friend of Monsieur Maincelle. Mais voila ! here is the carton below the parasol, regardez donc, Mademoiselle L. Browne, c'est ça !"

She hurried out and Lydia stood alone in the middle of the room immoveable. It did not entirely enter her brain at once, something seemed to deprive her of all feeling. Then a miserable despair and a deadly sense of humiliation and shame seized her ; what a fool, what an arrant fool she had been !

It all came upon her like a flash ; Miss Leyton Browne was the pretty English girl with the grey eyes, they were the friends he had expected. He had been in love with her all the time, and had left because afraid of himself, doubtful whether he would return at all.

"What a fool, what an arrant fool," she reiterated as she feverishly scribbled "Opened by mistake" on the torn envelope, placed the whole in another, and directed it anew to Miss Leyton Browne.

She put it into the pigeon hole of number twenty-three in the

lodge ; they could think what they liked, excepting—, yes, that should remain her secret. Thank God, Marie and the “carton” from the Bon Marché had saved her.

After all, she might have known that youth and beauty were everything in a man's eyes, was her bitter reflection. How could she for a moment have forgotten it ; she was old and worn and plain, all the more so because fate had not been kind to her in days gone by. Never mind, it would soon pass, that agonising feeling of pain and degradation. By this time the girl had received the letter, and would be very happy no doubt, she had a lovely face and looked sweet and good, it was much more suitable of course.

“Monsieur Maincelle is doubtless fiancé to the demoiselle of twenty-three,” Marie remarked when she brought the hot water the next day. He was always with her, would Mademoiselle observe them now from the balcony, they were returning from a walk, they were laughing. Ah, Mademoiselle was too busy, she had to go to the Luxembourg, would not be at home for “déjeuner.” She must have more time, just a little more. Having no engagement at the Luxembourg, she strolled into the garden, sat under the trees, and watched the ducks, as she so often had before. It was almost cool in the shade, the usual groups of children played round, the nurses with their smart be-ribboned caps gossipped, a tired working man now and then slouched along the paths. It was peaceful, pleasant and soothing. Yes, she felt better, the soreness was going, she could wish him joy now, could even face the picture Marie had raised of their happiness. There he was, coming through the trees ! Surely she might have been spared this ; she grew white to the lips and drew into the shadow, then smiled and held out her hand to him as he recognized her.

“I have something to confess,” she began bravely ; “I opened a letter by mistake, I saw it was not for me,—will you forgive me for surprising your secrets, and—may I—can I congratulate you ?”

He smiled too, and his face lit up, but there was more than amusement in it ; eagerness, anxiety, suspense, she could not quite tell what. He held something out to her ; the very letter with the torn envelope.

“I have brought it back to you,” he said, and his voice shook. “It was taken to the wrong person ; my little cousin saved it, and gave it to me, she knows all about it, Miss Leyton Browne is her aunt. It is yours—do you understand, Lydia ? will you read it—will you answer it now ?”

## A Strange Apparition.

(FOUNDED ON FACT).

By SARAH CATHERINE BUDD,

Author of "HAYDN," "MOZART," "CARMEN SYLVA," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER I.

It was a lovely June morning, on which we all drove to the station, when I, Maggie Trevor, went out into the world to seek my fortune—in other words, to become the companion of a young lady, "beautiful and rich," according to her aunt's description, but said to be afflicted with incurable melancholy.

My little nephews and nieces clustered around me on the platform; even the very dogs seemed to know I was going away. My sister-in-law, with her sweet, patient face, stood a little behind them, and I saw her eyes were full of tears.

"Aunt Maggie! Aunt Maggie!" cried the children, "it won't seem like home without you."

"It certainly will not," agreed the gentle mother.

"Winifred," I said, in a low voice, "if Jenny had not been big enough to take my place, I would never have left you, dear; besides, only think of a rector, with an ever-increasing family, and ever-decreasing tithes; surely he ought to have no extra burden."

"Burden, indeed!" exclaimed my sister-in-law, with shining eyes.

"Well, children, I promise you," cried I, trying to be gay, "when my money ship comes in, I will go back to the rectory never more to leave you."

How little we know! My money ship did indeed come in, but back to the rectory as a home, I never returned.

While we stood talking on the platform, and waiting for my train, a very handsome young fellow, with a fishing basket slung across his shoulder, and a rod in his hand, came up to us. After the usual greetings, he said:

"Miss Trevor, I think this is the day you are going away. I am bound for Barfoot, fishing. Will you allow me to see you through the tiresome changes, and put you straight for Carlton?"

"Thanks, Frank," said Winifred, warmly. "I am so glad; my husband could not well leave this morning; but if you are going some distance, I shall be comfortable about Maggie."

I privately wondered if Winnie guessed that the fishing was only a pretext as—with a warm glow at my heart—I believed it to be; and oh, the difference to me, to see him sitting opposite to me in the railway carriage and taking all trouble off my hands.

We waved to the sweet little group on the railway platform, until a curve in the line hid my dear ones from view—and then—and then—Frank Lewis told me a certain tale, which is ever new; but as I am not writing my own history, I will pass all this over, and come to my arrival at Stansted Hall, and to the strange experience which came to me while under that roof.

The house was not modern, but very handsome, built on rising ground, and surrounded by an extensive park. The country was richly wooded, a clear stream flowed through the valley, and a lovely range of blue hills could be seen in the distance.

On entering the house, I was shown at once into a morning room, where sat the mistress of the place—Mrs. Stansted. She was rather an old lady, but plump and fair still, and with a very kindly expression.

"So you are Miss Trevor," she said, holding out her hand. "I am glad to see you, my dear, and pleased that you are bright and nice-looking. Oh! I do hope," a shade fell over her face, "I do hope you will be able to cheer up our poor darling."

"You mean your niece, I suppose?"

"Yes, I am speaking of Miss Stansted; but she is not really my niece, only a distant cousin. Still, all the same, we are the nearest relations she has in the world. But, dear me, I am talking on, and you must be tired: Simmons shall show you your rooms, and give you a cup of tea, and then take you to Miss Stansted. We dine at seven."

Thus, with a kind smile I was dismissed, and followed Simmons up the richly decorated staircase, with a heart eased a little of its home-sickness.

I had expected a low-browed gloomy old hall, and this was about as bright and cheerful as one could well imagine. My bedroom, with a small sitting-room opening into it, was simply perfect. So I took heart, and followed Simmons to Miss Stansted's room with a pleasant anticipation.

Alas! one glance dispelled my illusions. The girl was young and very lovely, with fair wavy hair. She was curled up in an easy chair, gazing earnestly out of the window, and with the most disagreeable expression imaginable. I could not then see the sad wistfulness in her eyes, I only noticed the proud face with its haughty curves. There was no one else in the room, and after announcing me, Simmons swiftly retired.

"So you are my companion," remarked Miss Stansted, looking me over, as if I were a bale of goods. "What do they mean by companion? We shall never have anything in common, I can see that at a glance. What on earth do they mean by it?"

I began to feel angry, and the colour flew into my face. "Well, at any rate, I am here," I said, as quietly as I could, "properly engaged by Mrs. Stansted; and with your permission, I will sit down, for I am very tired."

A slight change came over the *hauteur* of her face.

"Oh, yes, pray sit down; we may as well be civil to each other for the short time we shall be together; I am sure it will not be long." Saying this, she took up a book, and appeared to be wholly absorbed in its contents.

To be even with her, I took up a newspaper which was lying on a davenport near at hand, and pretended to be reading—but my heart was sore at parting, and full of home sickness, and I could only see the children's bright faces, and Frank Lewis, now dearest of all. Tears came unbidden to my eyes, and one or two drops fell on my hand. I hated myself for my weakness, and still more, when by a sidelong glance, I saw Miss Stansted watching me.

"You don't mean to say," she remarked presently, in clear, liquid tones, "that there is anybody on this earth worth crying for?"

I threw down my paper.

"I am thankful to say I do," I answered, quickly. "All my home people are longing for me now; and even as I speak, the rectory garden rises before me; I hear the children at their play, and see my sweet, patient Winifred, sitting under the tulip tree, mending the little ones' socks, and thinking of me."

"Ah! who is Winifred, if one might ask?"

"My sister-in-law, the dearest and best of women."

A softened look came into her eyes. "How strange it is!" she exclaimed; "some lives so empty, others so full. I have no one to love me now. But I had once; oh! yes, yes!"

"And will again, I hope," I said, gently.

"No, no, never, never again; for he is gone—gone, dead and buried, perhaps—dead and buried."

Her hands fell listlessly into her lap, and her eyes had the saddest expression I ever saw.

Poor girl! Now I began to understand. She was most miserable. Perhaps by and bye I might help her. I walked over to the window, took a seat near her, and gently said, "If there is any doubt about your friend, hope for the best. Don't you think it wise to look on the bright side of things if one can?"

She bent forward, and in the lowest of tones, answered me. "Not in this house—never in this house." The affrighted expression in her eyes startled me.

"But this is the most cheerful house in the world," I made answer. She shuddered.

"Ah! you don't know who lives here; the man who drove my beloved out into the wild and stormy night, who has taken his home and place, and drove him to his death."

Her face was full of terrible excitement; but to my surprise, after a few minutes, her mood changed, and she fell back into her old listless attitude.

But I had seen a little below the surface, and bided my time.

When the gong sounded for dinner, Miss Stansted and I went down together. She was a vision of loveliness. I did not wonder at the rapid, almost stealthy, glance of admiration with which Mr. Stansted favoured her.

I was presented to the master of the house, and should have formed a most favourable impression from his open, frank countenance. He was not good-looking, being rather sandy and freckled. He was, however, a fine, well-grown man, and looked every inch a country squire.

One could see at a glance that Mrs. Stansted was exceedingly fond and proud of her son, and he paid her the most dutiful attention.

I certainly never saw a man who looked less like a villain than Mr. Stansted did. I was puzzled by the whole story, but was compelled to wait for time to unravel the mystery.

## CHAPTER II.

It was about a month after my arrival at Stansted Hall, that one lovely morning, Edith Stansted and I walked out into the park. It seemed a joy only to be alive, to ramble over the green turf, under the summer skies.

Edith and I had, day by day, drawn more closely together, and I had the happiness of feeling now, that my presence was a distinct help and comfort to the girl. Only, strange to say, she was always distant and cold to me when Mr. Stansted was near.

"We will go to the old cedar tree," said Edith; "it stands by itself, out of sight of the house, and there one cannot be overheard. I can then speak freely, in the house I never can."

There was something in her look and manner quite unusual, and as we sat down under the tree, my heart beat fast with dread of what was to come.

We sat for some minutes in silence; then Miss Stansted, looking me full in the face, asked, "What do you think of Mr. Stansted?"

This was just what I expected, and I cast about for something to say, which would not commit me to any real opinion. But she was too sharp for me.

"I know," she went on, nodding at me, "you think I am mistaken, he is frank and pleasant-looking, and you think no wickedness can lurk under those blue eyes and good-natured smile. You never were more deceived," she went on, emphatically, laying her hand on mine; "he is one of the most wicked men that ever lived—and more—I hate him so intensely that I could kill him. Yes, I should like to see him suffer—die. Nothing could be too bad for him." The look of fierce hatred in her face quite appalled me.

"Oh, Edith, my dear," I remonstrated, "oh, hush, hush!"

"I will not hush. Listen to what I have to tell you, then you can give your opinion—not before. I will recount my history. I was left an orphan while quite a baby, and lived in this house with my dear old uncle—the late Mr. Stansted. He was not really my uncle, only a distant relative; but he was my guardian, and always the best of fathers to a little lonely child. You think this place is pretty, but you don't love every tree and flower and hill and dale as I do. Oh! we were so intensely happy until he died. I often dream



that he is living, and wake up to the dreadful reality. My uncle had also another young cousin living here, to whom he was guardian and also adopted father ; for he made it no secret that Leonard was to be his heir. The estate was not entailed, and it was a settled thing that he should succeed my uncle. Oh, what a happy trio we were ! My heart aches to think of this past happiness, never, never to return. Oh, God," she groaned, " why are some people born only for sorrow, and others are so blessed."

I gently stroked her hand, but could not trust myself to speak. After a minute she went on.

" I must be quick, or *he* will find us out and grow suspicious. Well, we loved each other, and were to have been married when I was twenty-one. Uncle was so delighted : he said he could sing his *Nunc Dimittis* now, as our marriage had been the dearest wish of his heart for years. My uncle was not very old, but he was exceedingly delicate, and sometimes I had a dreadful fear that he would not live long. He was also very lame, and had a curious but beautifully made chair, by which he could propel himself noiselessly from room to room. There was a kind of desk attached, by which he could write or read at pleasure. One night my uncle and I were sitting near a bright fire, waiting for Leonard, who had gone to a political meeting. I remember it was a cold, stormy night ; the wind howled round the house, and bent the trees, and sent showers of heavy rain-drops against the windows. I noticed that my uncle seemed more thoughtful than usual ; and presently he said, drawing my head down upon his shoulder, and kissing me fondly, ' My little girl, I want to speak to you about my will ; Leonard knows what I wish. Nay, you must not look so frightened ; I shall not die an hour sooner for telling you about the will. Leonard is my adopted son, as everybody knows ; he will, of course, be my heir. The estate is not entailed—every acre unencumbered, and he will have a good fortune besides. You are rich, Edith, but I have remembered you in my will, because you are my little girl, and I love you. Also, out of respect for the old family name, I have left Robert Stansted and his mother some money, although they do not need it. I have been very careful about my will, because if I were to die intestate, Robert Stansted would be the heir.'

" Never, uncle," I cried, " that hateful man ! "

" ' It is so, Edith,' he sadly made answer, ' and he is a bad man,

all his early career has been vicious. Edith,' he suddenly called out, in a wild excited tone, 'if I thought that this house—my birthplace—the abode of good men and women for generations, would ever fall into that villain's hands, I should never rest in my grave, never; I should come and haunt the place until he was either dead or banished.'

"I cannot tell you the effect those words had upon me, they rang in my ears then, they ring in my ears now—afterwards he laughed this off a little, seeing, I suppose, that I looked frightened. But when Leonard came home my uncle told us very emphatically that the will was in the oak cabinet in the library, and explained the secret of the spring.

"In about a month after this my dear uncle died rather suddenly, and Leonard unhappily having gone abroad to see to some business for the estate, Robert Stansted hurried down from the North, on the pretext of helping me—as being next of kin—and Leonard away from home.

"He came the day before my dear uncle died, and although my Leonard travelled day and night he was too late, and oh! Maggie, when they searched for the will, they could not find it, and they have never found it from that day to this." As she concluded, I started so violently, that the flowers I held in my hand fell to the ground.

"But, Edith," I said hurriedly, "how could he possibly know—I see you mean that Mr. Stansted did away with the will, but how could he—how could he!"

"You are determined to take his part, well listen. Just before my uncle died, with great difficulty he reminded me about the oak cabinet and the spring. I was in too great distress to think about wills, when his life was ebbing fast away, it was only afterwards I remembered that while my dear uncle was speaking, there seemed a slight sound in the room, and I thought I saw a shadow flit away, Maggie," she ended solemnly, "that was Robert Stansted, and he stole the will from the oak cabinet."

A silence followed upon this. The birds sang overheard, and we sat so still, that rabbits with their little white tails scurried all around us, and a sweet and lazy hum of insects, filled the summer air.

But all these lovely sights and sounds were quite unheeded; we sat side by side full of painful thought.

"Edith," I asked at length, "when did Leonard come back?"

"Ah! that is the worst part; he came the night of the funeral. Oh! there was an awful, awful scene: Leonard accused him of destroying the will, and of trying to get me away from him; at last Robert turned Leonard out of the house—it was a wild, awful night—he drove him to his death, for he has never since been heard of."

"But how could you stay here a minute after that?" I exclaimed indignantly.

"Ah! why, can't you guess?" She leaned forward with a face as white as the dress she wore. "Maggie, he is too great a coward to have *destroyed* the will. It is somewhere in this house, and I am simply staying on to find it. He goes to London occasionally, and then I search, when all the house is still; some day I shall find it. As for my darling, I have moved Heaven and earth in search of him, but anyhow, be he living or dead, I shall yet have my revenge on Robert, I feel it coming nearer, day by day, I live for it, I gloat over the thought of his being turned out of this place with ignominy. As I told you once before, my hatred is so bitter and so intense I feel as if I could kill him. I want vengeance for what he has made us suffer, I should like to see him dying before my eyes." The look in her young face was so terrible, that it made me shiver.

"Edith, my dear," I replied solemnly, you are altogether going on a wrong tack—vengeance is not yours, but God's—so surely does any human soul try to wrest any of the attributes of the Almighty, than that soul comes to grief. We must leave it dear and try to do what is right *only*. Don't you think that He who sees in secret will sometime unravel the mystery? Meanwhile it is quite right to search for the will, only you ought to try to subdue such fierce hatred. Such hatred is akin to murder."

She drooped her head, and tears slowly fell—"Yes, no doubt I am very wicked, but do, do help me, Maggie, to find the will." Then she rocked herself to and fro, and fell into the most bitter weeping. "Oh! my Leonard!" she moaned.

My heart went out to the poor lonely, motherless girl, and then and there I vowed to stand by her through thick and thin, and never to rest until we had found the will.

That morning's conversation had quite altered the aspect of things, and I longed for the gong to sound so that during dinner I might watch Robert Stansted, without appearing to watch him. That he

was a good son none could doubt, who witnessed that day, his anxious solicitude because his mother had a cold. How she came to be his mother I cannot think, for she was a dear old lady, as Edith often remarked.

I watched Robert Stansted that evening, as closely as I dared, and enlightened by Leonard's words, I read deep and hopeless love for Edith, in every look and action. Yes, that was the clue, he had been determined to separate Leonard and Edith at all hazards. I longed to be alone, so that I might think over what steps we should take. So while Mr. Stansted was lingering in the dining-room over his wine and Edith was petting and waiting upon Mrs. Stansted in the drawing-room, I opened one of the long windows, and throwing on a light shawl, went out on the terrace, which was flooded with moonlight.

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### CHAPTER III.

It was a very lovely scene I looked upon. Far in the distance I could just trace the outline of the hills, which, in this softened light, looked like mountains. I could hear the river rippling over rough stones far down in the valley, and the wind sighing through the tree-tops. At my feet lay the shrubby walks, glistening with laurels, and farther off I could dimly see the beautiful glades of the park. I drew a deep breath of pleasure. Oh! how lovely it all was. Presently I turned into one of the shrubby walks, and pondered deeply as to what our next steps should be. Suddenly I had a kind of feeling that I was followed. It was only a feeling, for I certainly heard no sound. I stopped and listened intently; there was nothing to be heard but the sighing of the wind, and the brawling of the river, and now and again the deep baying of some hound from the stable yard. Again I stopped and listened. All was profoundly still: and yet I knew that I was followed. I wheeled round suddenly, so as to face my foe if he were near, and I almost screamed aloud in terror, as a dark figure came out from the shadow of the trees into the clear moonlight. A tall, handsome man, with a pale face and piercing eyes, stood before me.

"Hush!" he said, in a deep-toned agitated voice, "hush, we may be watched."

In an instant, with a glad throb at my heart, I knew this could be none other than Leonard Stansted.

"You are Miss Trevor," he said hurriedly. "I know all about you, and I watch you both from afar. My dear love confides in you, that is enough for me. I am only too thankful you are with her. Now tell me all about her, quick, quick, for we are not safe here, even for a moment."

Then I rapidly told him everything of what we were going to do, and why Edith still lingered at Stansted Hall. He was deeply moved.

"Yes, yes," he said, "I never really doubted her—oh! my little ove! Tell her I am now in hiding at my old nurse's in a little cottage by the sea shore, but I am always watching, and I have a plan nearly developed, which I must tell you of, but not to-night—Edith will know where I am hiding, if you mention my old nurse. I dare not write, for my letters would fall into that villain's hands. God bless you, take care of her," and in another moment he was gone.

I crept back to the house, full of my new joy, but as ill luck would have it, I encountered Mr. Stansted in the hall.

"You have chosen rather a strange hour for a lonely walk, Miss Trevor," he remarked with a deep look.

"Oh! I only went a little way in the grounds, it was most lovely," I replied, as unconcernedly as I could, but I did not like his look, and hurried into the drawing-room, where Edith was still talking to Mrs. Stansted.

I was in a perfect fever until bed-time arrived, I could hardly keep still. When at length we went upstairs I followed Edith into her room. She must have seen something unusual in my face, for she dismissed her maid at once, and locking the door, turned to me.

"Well, Maggie, oh! what is it?" Then I told my joyful news, with such deep thankfulness. Oh! the change that passed over her lovely face! Her eyes shone like stars.

"Oh! my Leonard! now, mine for ever, thank God for this—and Maggie, what a darling you are! How thankful I am you ever came here!"

"I must not linger to-night," I said, "Mr. Stansted is already suspicious, and we must not seem to be holding a long conversa-

tion." So I left her with a happy glow in her face, and went into my own bedroom, not far away. Here I let down my hair, put on my dressing gown and slippers, and partially raising the blind of one of the windows, I looked out on the fair moonlit scene. I was thinking about the lost will, and wishing—oh! how earnestly—that it could be found, when suddenly from out the shadow of the trees, passing swiftly into the moonlight, came Mr. Stansted. I could see him quite plainly. He looked up once towards the house, then turned into the very shrubbery walk where I had gone earlier in the evening, and seemed to be searching for something. My heart beat fast at the sight. Hastily drawing down the blind and turning up the lamp, I sat down on a couch feeling frightened at—I knew not what. How long I sat there I shall never know, but I was perfectly wide awake, and thinking so earnestly about the will, I felt no inclination for sleep. Suddenly, to my intense astonishment, as well as fear, the room seemed full of a soft mist, and when it cleared away, the door came open. and into the room—propelling himself noiselessly in a beautifully made chair with a desk attached—came *old Mr. Stansted*, the man who, some months before, had been laid to rest in the family vault in Cramer churchyard. I knew him in an instant, for his portrait hung over the carved oak cabinet in the library; there was also a painting of him in the dining-room. A cold perspiration came over me, I shook in every limb—to this day I wonder I did not scream or faint. He came to within a yard or two of where I was sitting, looked earnestly at me, then taking up a piece of blue law-paper, he began rapidly to write. My teeth chattered, the beating of my heart seemed to sound in my ears, and deafened me, I quite thought I was going to die.

After a few minutes, which to me seemed hours, the apparition moved away; but, as he neared the door, he looked back at me with an entreating gesture as if he wished me to follow him—I shivered, but could not move—I seemed tied down with a heavy weight; so we remained—for how long I cannot tell—he looking at me with beseeching eyes, I ever resisting. Then the soft mist once more arose, and the whole vision faded away. As soon as he was gone I sank down upon the couch trembling and sobbing, my nerves all unstrung and nearly fainting. I am not, however, naturally a coward, so after a while when I had recovered myself

a little, I bitterly repented that I had not followed up the clue, which seemed to have been put into my hands. At last I crept into bed, registering a vow, that if the apparition appeared the next night—as I felt persuaded it would—at all risks to myself, I would find out the secret of the hidden will if I could.

I woke up the next morning with a frightful headache, for which I was thankful, as it gave me an excuse for being silent and pre-occupied.

Edith, however, was happy enough for both. "Her Leonard was not dead, so all must come right."

She sang about the house when Mr. Stansted was away, and her face was lit up with smiles.

As bedtime approached, I grew nervous and frightened, and was almost on the verge of asking Edith to share my room. The next minute I reproached myself bitterly for this. A delicate girl like Edith must not share my horror and anxiety.

Shaking like a leaf, I entered my room and locked the door; then sitting down with an awful fear in my heart, I waited. Twelve o'clock chimed from my little timepiece on the mantel, and then he came. We went through the same experience, he looked at me with beseeching eyes, and waved for me to follow, but I seemed turned to stone and still resisted, and then the vision faded away, and I was left to my self-reproaches and to my tears.

During the long hours of that wakeful night, I pondered deeply. Being convinced that he would return once more, I solemnly resolved, that come what may, I would follow the apparition even if I dropped dead on the spot. How the day passed I cannot tell. I heard Edith's happy talk and laughter as in a dream, but through it all I saw the pale face of the old man—her uncle—and met his beseeching eyes.

"Don't stay in my room to-night," whispered Edith, as we stood in her dressing-room with the door shut. "I am sure his suspicions are aroused, and you were so white and silent at dinner. He must not know that Leonard is alive, and where he is staying, he must not." She clasped her hands. "He would stop at nothing. My darling's very life is in peril."



## CHAPTER IV.

As I crossed the corridor, to go into my own bedroom, I thought I saw a shadow on the wall, as if someone were listening. Ah, me, what, after all, was this shadow compared with the one I had resolved to follow that night?

At the solemn hour of midnight, he came and looked me full in the face with the same imploring eyes. Trembling all over, and my heart beating furiously, I was strung up to the highest pitch of excitement, and I said aloud, although in a voice unlike my own, "Yes, I mean to follow you, if it be to death."

As we came out into the corridor, strange to say, my excessive terrors gradually grew less, and by the time we had reached a small study in the western wing, my nerves were beginning to recover their tone. I had never entered the room before. It was a private study of the old squire, and almost entirely lined with books.

My guide never hesitated for a single moment, but went swiftly forward to the fireplace, and bending down, he pointed to a particular square in the tiled flooring. I knelt down, and eagerly looked to be sure that I knew the right one. "One, two, three, four," I counted; yes, it is the fourth tile, and I put my finger on it. That very instant the apparition vanished away, and was seen no more.

I went back into my room, resolving to keep awake and plan what we should do. Instead, however, I fell fast asleep, and did not wake until the sweet dawn was breaking. I got out of bed, and looked at that lovely view from my windows, and noticed shafts of golden light were trembling in the eastern sky. What would this day bring forth for us?

I put on my dressing gown, and crept softly into Edith's room. Happily the door was unlocked. She opened her lovely eyes, and stared at me in the greatest astonishment. I put my finger on my lips, and she was in an instant awake and watchful. I lay down beside her, on the bed, and in a very low tone, told her all my story. As I went on with my recital, she flushed and started violently, then trembled all over. But when I finished, tears poured down her cheeks like rain.

"Oh, thank God!" she cried. "Leonard will now be righted, and you are the most wonderful, wonderful brave darling. We shall owe everything to you; it would have killed me outright."

After this we fell to discussing plans. Happily for us, Mr. Stansted was going to London the very next day, therefore, we agreed that I should find out the little cottage on the shore, and tell Leonard everything.

That night, when the house was profoundly still, we stealthily let Leonard in through a side door, and he, bringing the necessary tools, we all three made our way to the little study.

Oh, what moments those were when Leonard was loosening the tile! We looked like three conspirators. Our faces were as white as if turned to stone, and it seemed to me as if the beating of our hearts must have been audible. But, oh joy! what did anything matter now, it seemed as if nothing could harm us any more, for Leonard *found the will*. The evening of Mr. Stansted's return we all gathered in the library waiting for him. Luckily for us Mrs. Stansted was not very well and kept her room.

"John," said Edith, to one of the footmen, as she passed through the hall, "when Mr. Stansted returns ask him to come to the library for a few minutes, as I wish to speak with him."

Then we three waited. I had almost said four waited, for the portrait over the oak cabinet, kept his eyes steadfastly fixed upon us, and seemed to be waiting and watching also. After what seemed to us a long time, we heard Mr. Stansted's step in the hall. Edith and I sat by the library table; but Leonard, on hearing the footsteps, rose, and drawing himself up to his full height, stood at the table with his hand upon the will. It was a striking scene. Leonard with his pale, handsome, resolute face, and Edith's lovely profile framed against one of the windows. The sun was near its setting, a gentle breeze sighed through the shrubs, and the golden light printed a pattern of moving leaves over the table and the will. The footsteps drew nearer. He came. I shall never forget the look in his face as he entered the room. His usually healthy skin flushed to a deep purple. He sprang forward.

"So you are not dead. Go out of my house this very minute, you villain, you thief," he thundered, "I will call my men to kick you out, you double-dyed traitor."

In that wild moment, he forgot even Edith, in his passionate hatred towards the man he had so wronged. Leonard stood quietly at the table with his hand still upon the will, calm and resolute.

"You forget yourself," he said slowly and sternly, "it is you who

are the villain and the thief, and, moreover, I order you to leave my house, and go up to your place in the North, and never show your face down South again, or the law shall take its course.

"Ah! you quail at the word law. This is the first time in all your vicious life that you have put yourself under the power of the law."

"Law, whatever do you mean?" stammered Robert Stansted, the colour slowly dying out of his face.

"Did you ever see this before?" asked Leonard, holding up his uncle's will. "Who was it crept into the dear old man's room when he lay a-dying, and found out the secret of the oak cabinet and the spring? and then being a coward, as well a thief, buried it in the little study under a square of the fireplace? Who was that, I ask?"

"Oh, my God!" cried the guilty man, crushed and abject in a moment, his face as white as ashes, with the freckles showing more plainly than ever.

"Go," commanded Leonard, extending his hand, "you know my unalterable resolve, and you may think yourself lucky to escape thus easily."

Robert Stansted looked smaller and older as he crept away to the door, but he turned before reaching it, and looked at Edith. His lips scarcely formed the words "my mother." She understood him in a moment. His one good point was his love for his mother.

"She shall never know," said Edith, emphatically.

"No one shall ever know," concluded Leonard. "May God forgive you as we do."

No one ever guessed the dark secret, the will had simply turned up, that was all that was commonly known. The cousins were far too happy to wish for revenge. And the old uncle haunts no more the long corridors. His work is done. Frank Lewis and I have long since married and are settled not far from Stansted Hall. And the rectory children to their own intense delight visit often at both homes. Yes, many children now scamper up and down the great staircase, all through the wide, sunny house, and peace and happiness brood once more over the old hall.

## ANATKH.

We are but phantoms, and our life a dream,  
A floating bubble on time's flowing tide ;  
Shadows surround us ; things are not, but seem ;  
Truth sways a world to our weak eyes denied.

The mocking Roman in his judgment hall  
Voiced the vain striving of the human race ;  
For " What is Truth ? " is still the cry of all—  
" Matter or spirit ? life, death, time, or space ? "

Man is a slave who dreams of liberty,  
A maniac strutting in a crown of straw ;  
The links that fetter him he cannot see,  
But raves of Freedom and the Moral Law.

Some gravely quote the choice of Herakles  
(A glozing sophist told that tale for gold)  
And some the lessons of Upsilon please :  
The roads that branch to Death and Life's true fold.

Necessity impels the wand'rer's course,  
Urges his footsteps with her iron goad ;  
Freedom his watchword, while he yields to Force ;  
He chooses not, but walks a chosen road.

For some the way leads on to wealth and pow'r,  
For some to want, and misery and shame ;  
But unto all there comes one fatal hour,  
When rags and purple raiment are the same.

Repentance hovers o'er the desert track,  
And mocks the pilgrims with her specious lies.  
" The bygone seasons could I measure back,  
How different my course ! " each wand'rer cries.

Alas ! could they the starting post regain,  
*Kismet* would still their shackled feet attend ;  
The same delusions, follies, lust, and pain ;  
The race once run, the same appointed end.

W. B. WALLACE, B.A.

## The Tipping of a Lady of Property.

By A. R. STONE.

To prevent misapprehension, it will be better to state at once, that there is no mistake in the title of this incident—no omission—no tipping of the lady of property into the mud, the river, the boiling oil, or anything else is intended; nor does “wink” come into it either—it simply means exactly what it states, without addition or implication. Whether the lady was tipper or tippee—to adopt legal phraseology—you will learn on reading. It is just possible a doubt will spring up in your mind before you reach the end, as to whether she was a lady of very large property; but in any case, if it is thought to be a question open to further investigation, any reader may undertake it if he or she likes.

Will you kindly cast your eye over the map of the Lake of Lucerne, which the Committee of Publicity of that picturesque city publishes for the behoof of travellers, or failing that, the excellent map in *Baedeker* will do equally well, and you will see on the west side of the arm of the lake running down to Fluellen, a small village named Isenthal. It is rather difficult of access, lying back in a narrow valley, which is quite unsuspected by passengers by the St. Gothard Railway, or by those who take the Lake steam-boat, and it has (so to speak) Isleten for its port.

You can reach it in about three hours, by skirting the lake from Fluellen, round by Seedorf, and then zigzagging up the rocks to Kreuzhohe—just opposite Tells' chapel, which everyone knows and goes to see—and then along the floor of the valley to the village. Another way is over the mountains from Engelberg; a third is along the Schonegg Pass, from Wolfenchiessen in the Stans-Engelberg valley. But taking all these ways together, I doubt if a dozen English people go there per season. I, who lay this problem before you, arrived by the first route, and have tried a fourth which is not satisfactory, and so I suppress it.

Well, the village is very much like other Swiss villages—it is grouped round the church, which raises a short tower above the roofs of the houses round. There is one inn (Gasser's, with three beds,

as Baedeker puts it), a sawmill or two, the village forge, and châteaux dotted here and there, with big stones on the roofs "to keep them from being blown away," as Mark Twain judged.

The village Isenthal lies at the junction of two valleys, the Klienthal and the Grossthal, separated by what is really a buttress of the Uri-Rothstock, and on a miniature scale, the picture that meets one's eye resembles the famous view so well known at Rosenlaui.

Knowing the capacity of the inn to be three beds, and having been there before, and being a party of three, we thought well to write and say we were coming and proposed to occupy the inn. We reckoned without the French artist and his family, who were before us. However, rooms had been got for us in the village, and I understood (my German being defective) that we were to lodge with the curé. The inn maidservant took us down and installed us in what were certainly comfortable quarters; but we saw neither curé nor anyone else at first. Later on, we went back, and failing to open the door by the apparatus spoken of by the wolf in Red Riding Hood, as "pull the string, and the door will open," were let in and lighted upstairs by a not uncomely young woman of some twenty-five years. Who was she? was the problem which engaged our attention. As we were in Catholic Switzerland, daughter of the curé she could not be, servant it was unlikely that she was, as curés are saved from temptation by having assigned to them as housekeepers, the most unprepossessing of widows.

Next morning, the old gentleman himself appeared, and from his dress might have been curé, schoolmaster, or anything. We found he spoke some kind of French *patois*, and finally he showed us a part of the house which looked like and we understood to be the village school. We then put him down to be village schoolmaster, and as such our female problem might be daughter, niece, or servant. That appeared to cover all the possibilities of the case, but as we wished (partly from male curiosity) to be certain about the matter, we asked the inn-maid who the damsel was. Her answer astonished us, and knocked all our theories on the head.

"She is a rich young lady of—(mentioning a village near Brunnen.) A lady of property—very well off." "Well off" that is according to Swiss peasant ideas we concluded.

A hasty conference decided us, that to tip the inn-servant on

leaving was quite right and proper, but that we could not offer such an indignity to a lady of property, Prudence, however, suggested the providing of two separate 'two-mark pieces to be used or not as things might turn out.

We were to start at three the next morning on a climbing expedition among the mountains with descent to Engelberg, and about two o'clock came a gentle tap at our doors—the lady of property had, in her kind condescension, called us, and we supposed gone back to her room again. Not to disturb anyone, we dressed quietly and tiptoed downstairs, and went off to the inn, some hundred and fifty yards off. My heavy boots had been taken away to be cleaned and I expected to find them again at the inn.

While we and the guide were making preparations and drinking our coffee, the light of a lantern came up to the path, and inn-servant and lady of property appeared in the path together, the latter carrying my boots—had she cleaned them herself? There was a new question. The situation was getting tight. A few minutes would see it through. All being ready I went up to the servant, presented her with her coin which she received with a "danke schon" and "gute Reise," came in answer to "auf wiedersehen," then taking my courage in both hands, with shamefacedness, I went through the same ceremony with the lady of property. Did she refuse or blink or show resentment?—not a bit—she pocketed the coin without turning a hair, smiled and wished us good journey with easy grace that threw our behaviour deeply into the shade. Off we went stumbling after the guide up the path into the darkness. The usual topic of conversation on starting a three o'clock in the morning expedition is the folly of such a course of action at all, but for once that subject was shelved in favour of an argument upon "What she would do with it," "she," of course, being the lady of property aforesaid. "Quot homines tot sententiæ." We were three and the guide didn't count—neither entering into nor understanding what his "Herren" were discussing in so animated a fashion. Our opinions were divided and remained so upon the three following courses which we sketched out for the lady to follow. It was held she would enter the tip in her morocco bound account book with a silver mounted pencil (or on her ivory tablets), but her inexperience of book-keeping would everlastingly throw her accounts out of balance by entering the tip on the debit



instead of the credit side. Another of the party thought that she would invest it, seeking to increase her already great wealth, by buying a ticket in the next cantonal tombola she heard of. The third suggestion was that she would imitate Mark Twain's custom-house officer, who hung on his watch chain the coin the English lady tipped him with, and which she recognised when he took her in to dinner the next evening. The English lady's confusion will be as nothing compared with ours if our lady of property does act in this last way; and we catch sight of the thing dangling from her chain. To save us from an awkward position, we intend keeping away from Isenthal this summer. Will anyone else accept my suggestion and investigate the matter further? It seems to want it, and perhaps to be worth it.

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### Our Souls are one.

I know not where thou art, Belovèd!  
Near, or far, on-land or sea,  
Yet, I know thou'rt ever near me  
Where I am thy heart must be;  
I hear thee whisper "Love! I love thee"  
When the dawn wakes new delight,  
I feel thy spirit watch above me  
In the dreamy hush of night.  
Love! tho' distant thou mayst be,  
I know thou'rt ever near to me.

If 'tis sorrow's chain that holds me,  
Grieving 'neath its bitterness,  
I feel thy gentle arms enfold me  
Soothing with their tenderness;  
Thy loving lips seem near to mine, dear,  
Whisp'ring "Hope! pain clouds must part"  
Tho' sore the strife, I ne'er repine, dear,  
Thou art with me, heart to heart!  
Love! tho' parted we may be,  
Our souls are one Eternally.

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G. HUBI NEWCOMBE.

## Damocles, or the Gates of Janus.

By THEODORA CORRIE.

Author of "IN SCORN OF CONSEQUENCE," "PETRONELLA DARCY,"  
"ONLY THE AYAH," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER XXX.—*continued.*

"If that is the case, if we could go with Solway, instead of being crowded up with a lot of other people on board some ship, the voyage would be quite a different thing," said Mrs. Godwin, hastily. "Indeed, I think it might be a most excellent plan and save a great deal of fatigue, too." Her fears of possible seasickness vanished before this unexpected invitation, never before received, but vainly hinted at and coveted for many years.

"Of course," Ted said, "if Henrietta preferred going the other way we could break the journey, stay a week in Paris, do a few of the lions, and see something of Paul."

"Yes, but I think I would rather go by sea," said Henrietta, gently.

"Then it is settled," he answered. "Solway and I were agreeing, only the other day, that sea breezes ought to do you good."

"In any case I am not strong enough for sight-seeing," Mrs. Godwin said; "And I doubt if Paul would care to look us up." He seems to prefer new faces, and new places too, to old ones. I never pretend to understand him."

She spoke with a slight air of *pique*, secretly put out at Ted's deferring everything to Henrietta, and afraid to betray the real cause of her vexation.

Henrietta moved uneasily, and her hand trembled.

"Paul had better get married," said Ted, looking at his future mother-in-law with a smile hard to resist. "I told him so the other day, and he wants looking after."

"Unfortunately he is wedded to his writing," said Mrs. Godwin, with her usual air of superior intelligence. "I have good reason to know he will never marry; in fact he has said as much to me himself."

The moment the words had passed her mother's lips, they struck Henrietta with a sense of disloyalty. A burning flush mounted to her brow, followed speedily by a pallor so startling that Ted could not but be aware of it.

"Paul is very young to vow himself to celibacy," he said, carelessly. "But literature is an exacting mistress, judging by his looks; of course he has been worried about the loss of his play; he has had no news of it yet."

"Oh, no, of course not," said Mrs. Godwin, disdainfully. "English

police are no good. Paul had better re-write the play. He has nothing to make a fuss about. It isn't a very lengthy work. He must have dawdled dreadfully to take a year writing it. He is very foolish to take the affair so much to heart, and so is Henrietta. She has always spoilt Paul by seeing everything through his spectacles. She wouldn't be laid up now," reverting to an original grievance, "if it were not for his tiresome habit of expecting her to get up to see him off. The day he left she came in looking like a ghost."

Mrs. Godwin could never forgive anyone else who usurped her rôle of invalid, even temporarily.

"I never knew before," said Ted, coolly, "that the influenza depended on early rising."

Mrs. Godwin took up her salts bottle, but for once Ted paid no attention to this small danger signal.

"You must miss Paul very much. Has the loss of his play been a great worry to you, darling?" he asked.

"I do miss him," said Henrietta, a little unsteadily. "As for the play, I cannot bear talking about it."

At this moment her honest nature suffered acutely. She had never wittingly told a lie in her life, or put a shadow of deception between herself and Ted. To rob the postman might seem a venial sin to the Count, but the girl could not fail to recognise the false impression necessarily caused by her silence, whenever the affair was discussed. The Count had known for many years of the De Follet skeleton, but by Godwin's wish, it had always been buried, so far as other people were concerned.

This afternoon the sudden consciousness of tacit deceit nearly upset the girl's sorely tried powers of self-command. In an access of nervousness, she jumped up, walked to the fire and stretched out both hands to the blaze.

Ted looking at her, saw that she was shivering.

Quite out of temper by this time, Mrs. Godwin rose with an affronted air, and walked off into the conservatory, making some trivial excuse about seeing to her parrots.

The two left behind scarcely heard her go. Ted coming up to Henrietta, laid a light hand on her shoulder.

"You are very tired," he said, gently.

Henrietta drew a deep breath, then looked up at him with a smile. In her whole air and manner lay a perilous loveliness which struck Ted with a keen pang of anxiety. Involuntarily the clasp of his hand tightened.

"Hetty," he said, very quietly, "I wonder if you know how much I care for you?"

The colour rushed into Henrietta's face.

"I care for you so much," he repeated, slowly, "that if it would make you happier to send me away to the other end of the world, I would go."

"It would make me very miserable," she said, in a low voice. "I feel so much safer—I mean happier, when you are in the house."

"This sea voyage; you think you will like it?" he asked her next.

"More than anything, Ted. It is what I have always longed for."

You mustn't be anxious about me," she went on. "People always get fanciful when they are ill. You are a great deal too good to me."

"You haven't given me much chance, so far, Hetty."

Her lips opened impulsively, then closed again. During the past few weeks, wrapping herself in a Spartan cloak of reserve, she had talked about everything but the real cause of her illness. Now trusting Ted implicitly, conscious of a presence altogether stronger, more restful than her mother's, a great longing came over her to cling to the kind hand that held hers, and pour out all her troubles. But so far, her lips were effectually sealed.

Love has its own fine intuitions. At this moment a sudden inspiration flashed into Henrietta's mind. Her uncle would be coming to San Rimini for her mother's marriage. She would then make an opportunity; she would ask leave to tell Paul's family history to Ted. Godwin would know that no idle whim could prompt such a request, might guess that she wished to have no secrets from her future husband. Such a request could more easily be made in half-a-dozen words opportunely chosen, than put formally into a letter which might be read by Evelyn.

An inward conviction came over Henrietta as from some far depth of consciousness that Ted had the right to know of the part she herself had played, to censure her for it if need be.

Moreover, although the Count had strongly advised that nothing should be said to Godwin about Paul's curious lapse of memory, this counsel, so far obeyed, had begun to trouble Henrietta; she wanted a second opinion about it.

Once get leave to speak to Ted of the De Follet skeleton, and it would be possible to ask advice about her present difficulty. While these thoughts passed through her head, she stood silently looking into the fire, with the wearied manner of a person who has overtaxed their own strength.

The two were still standing side by side when Mrs. Godwin came back from her solitary promenade in the conservatory. Ted roused himself instantly.

"Hetty has been down quite long enough for the first time," he said, "I must give her an arm upstairs."

With a matter-of-course air, he saw the girl to her own door, then came back to the drawing-room, and restored Mrs. Godwin's equanimity by a little amiable conversation.

Taking leave ten minutes later in his usual fashion, he rode off homewards. But he caught the evening express to Dover, and was absent for forty-eight hours, excusing himself to George Clifford on the plea of necessary business.

At the end of this time he re-appeared with the welcome news that the "Clytie" was in Southampton Water, and that a start could be made whenever Henrietta felt fit to set out.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

DURING the next few days preparations for the voyage went on busily. Ted and Henrietta were constantly together. Yet, try as the girl would to go on as usual, she was possessed by an inward sense of constraint. Wallis, now about again, had met her in the garden with Ted. The man's own conversation, chiefly about the recovery of the post-bag and the rare scare he had given his assailant, she had listened to quietly enough, but the whole affair haunted her day and night. She was eager to be off—to leave Godwin's Rest. Her manner, touched sometimes with nervousness, restlessness, evoked various irritable comments from her mother.

Ted never appeared to notice anything unusual; always thoughtful, he took, if possible, more care of Henrietta than ever; while Mrs. Godwin, entirely self-absorbed, made many plans, and made herself busy over a thousand nothings.

Very cheerful letters had been received from John and Evelyn, whose movements were somewhat erratic. They appeared to be travelling in Montaigne's fashion, with an even greater sense of enjoyment.

May, too, was proving herself an excellent correspondent. Her letters were full of the delights of balls and dinner parties, and of her own position as an acknowledged belle. She and Patrick, after a farewell dinner to the regiment, intended to make a tour in India, among the north-west provinces, and to come home again in the spring, via Sicily.

Mrs. Godwin could now look forward to entertaining her daughter with some magnificence. Her own income supplemented by John's generous allowance would suffice abroad, not only for comfort, but for some luxury; although the great fortune in the family could never be put to any satisfactory account. Circumstances, or rather people, had always conspired to deceive her. She regarded, and would always regard, John and Evelyn as living monuments of duplicity.

Meantime, she was much exercised about her own trousseau. A week in Paris would have settled the matter satisfactorily, though Henrietta could never, of course, be expected to sympathise sufficiently about clothes.

Still, the mention of the voyage to Sicily in the "Clytie" would look well in the papers, and Solway could give her away. Proper feeling about his brother would prevent John from taking the principal place at her second marriage. In the solitude of her own room, Mrs. Godwin drew pictures of her own wedding, deciding that Henrietta, under existing circumstances, had much better be married later on from Palermo.

Her daughter's marriage would make a great stir in the place. Aunt Catherine and Solway would be there, of course, as the former was already arranging to come to Italy for the winter. The wedding if properly managed would not soon be forgotten.

The Comtesse de Brie, in her ancestral home, might entertain a

large and select circle of guests, to the permanent good effect on the perceptions of her neighbours as to her own social standing. A full account of the wedding could go to the "Morning Post," the "Court Journal," and other papers.

Though still very angry with John, she had begun to long more and more for bluer skies, and a more genial climate. The weather, though fine, had become very cold, with a sharp touch of frost in the air. To her satisfaction, before another week elapsed, Godwin's Rest was in the hands of the workmen, while she herself, Henrietta and Ted, after travelling by rail to Southampton, at last went on board the "Clytie."

The weather proved fine, the sea almost as still as a mill-pond. Lying in a deck chair under the shady awning exactly suited Mrs. Godwin. In reality no bad sailor, she thoroughly enjoyed the voyage.

Solway, genuinely sorry for Henrietta's delicate looks, paid the elder lady a great deal of attention, in order to keep her happily occupied; even offering to return later on to San Rimini for the wedding. Her languid airs and graces—the airs, be it understood, of a very handsome woman—amused him, while her siestas in a deck-chair, comfortably broken by unnecessary conversation, interfered not at all with her own violin playing.

By the time the voyage was over, Mrs. Godwin almost believed that she might have become Duchess of Harebrook if providence had not intervened. The conviction threw a halo of virtuous self-restraint over her own behaviour, and kept her in an excellent temper.

Unfortunately, almost in sight of Genoa, the weather changed suddenly. Rain fell in a continuous drizzle; the wind rose, and a short, choppy sea filled her with nervous forebodings. Directly after dinner, she beat a retreat to her own cabin, and went to bed, determined, if possible, to remain unaffected by the increased motion of the yacht.

Henrietta, not at all sleepy, went to the small second saloon, specially given up to her own and her mother's use, and established herself there with a book and a pile of cushions.

Since coming on board, the change of air and scene had had a beneficial effect upon her health; but this evening, left for once to her own devices, she became suddenly possessed by an attack of depression. Ted, to-day, had asked her very quietly about their marriage, suggesting that it should take place in the spring, saying that after Mrs. Godwin's own wedding, Henrietta could stay for a time with the Duchess.

To this arrangement, Henrietta at once assented, beset all the time with unspoken perplexity. That the wedding should take place at San Rimini, almost immediately—this, according to her mother, had been Ted's earnest wish, expressed but a short time ago. But he himself had never said anything to her about a speedy marriage, and to judge by his manner to-day, the idea might have been only a figment of Mrs. Godwin's own brain.

A vague feeling of discomfort and of uneasiness stole over her. Left alone, her mind went back presently to past events, from past



events to Paul, and the painful occurrences of the last few weeks. After a time, the movement of the vessel insensibly lulled her senses. Half reclining against a cushion, she dropped into a light sleep.

The rising wind, the sigh of the rain, the calling voices of the sea still came to her ears faintly, and while she slept she dreamed—a dream so strange, so vivid, that it came upon her with all the effect of a vision. Again and again during the last few weeks she had dreamed of Paul. To-night, borne on the wind, she heard Paul's voice. He was calling to her. She must go to him.

The porthole opened widely, the saloon itself faded away, and she seemed to be standing in a graveyard before a strange building. No, not altogether strange surely. With the finer intuition born of sleep alone Henrietta recognised the pile of masonry in front of her in an instant: knew it to be the White House. She remembered to have been here often before in her dreams; always on the outside of the house, never able to effect an entrance.

This evening the rooms appeared to be brightly lit up, but the windows stretching out in a long line were all securely fastened. It seemed that she tried them one after another fruitlessly. Standing by the last casement she looked in to discover that the room was tenanted by two figures, to see that Paul and Madame de Follet were sitting there together.

Paul sat on the floor at Madame de Follet's feet, leaning his head against her knee, while she, frail and worn, carrying with her the impress of another world, passed thin fingers over his hair.

Watching the two together, touched by a strange feeling of anxiety Henrietta strove to speak to call out, tapping again and again on the glass, but her fingers and voice alike made no sound.

Abandoning the vain attempt to be heard, there grew upon her a sharp sense of powerlessness and of dread. More than once she saw Paul's hand go up to his head. As the minutes passed the look of palor and of suffering on his face became strongly marked.

Henrietta knew at this moment without a shadow of doubt, that this room peopled with memories, littered with books, was weighing on his heart: knew that the face at his side graven with anguish, with the cloistered look seen only on faces too much alone, unconsciously reproached him for his own enforced absence.

The pitifulness and the cruelty of life's mistakes struck her to-night through Paul as they had never struck her before.

Outside through her dream the rain fell heavily. She shivered with cold, and once again the calling of the sea came like a cry on the wind, borne from afar off.

Still watching, still unable to effect an entrance she saw presently that Madame de Follet slept, and while she slept a second door at the far end of the room was pushed lightly ajar. Who was in there in the inner room watching, unseen and unheard? If only Madame de Follet had remained awake.

The strange penetrating dread at Henrietta's heart grew deeper. Possessed of a strength born of love and fear, it seemed to her at this moment that nothing could hold her back—the next instant she



had passed the dividing barrier, had gained the inside of the room, and stood at Paul's elbow. He seemed to be reading. The book in his hand, a thin, well-worn leather-covered volume; she must look at it! But though she drew closer, even leaned over Paul's shoulder as he turned the leaves, he still appeared unconscious of her presence, and, wrapped in a paper cover, the book appeared to be without a title.

Still struggling with a sense of terror of something unknown, unfathomable, full of that strange sense of anguish which springs only from utter helplessness, Henrietta fell to watching Paul's face—all the time unable herself to utter a sound.

Only a few pages Paul read: then the hand holding the book shook like a leaf. A strange pallor, a grey shadow crept over his face, he reeled in his chair as he sat.

What was this frightful dread which had come upon him coupled with a wild sense of nightmare?

The title of the book! Once again Henrietta leant forward determined to see it. Only one word! It rose up now written in letters of fire. The little old book lent to her by Ted! She had seen it burnt. How had Paul found it at last?

A sharp rending agony passed through her brain, a glare as of blinding white light. For one dreadful moment she saw Paul's face. Lit by memory, by the volume in his hand she saw the past rise before him, like the handwriting on the wall.

*She saw that he remembered.*

From that instant his identity became her own—Alcirat—Le Pont Macabre. The ten titles of the lost book stood out in letters of fire. Agony, sharp, irresistible once again shot through her. Unable to speak, to cry out, she stood waiting. Paul had remembered! Paul was going mad; and she herself stood there powerless to control the breaking cords of his brain, as to stay the storm outside. She saw that in a strange delirium he had gone back to the terror of his childhood.

The inner door, the door leading to his own bedroom opened slowly. In another moment Henrietta felt rather than saw that a figure was coming out, the figure of Paul's grandfather. With a reeling consciousness of vast calamity, with a last protective effort she tried all in vain to come between the two. Consciousness nearly gone at that moment showed her a second figure beside the first. Surely the light about it was blinding, angelic; and surely the face of the Comte de Follet tranquil, content, serene, could never in thought even have caused Paul fear? And that other face behind: no, in front, coming nearer and nearer. That vision, glorious, unspeakable, surrounded by a great light! Henrietta drew back now, awed, stilled.

Paul saw it at last. A look of rapture passed over his face, transfiguring all the lines, drawn, wild, scarcely human but a moment before; and he started to his feet.

At the sudden movement it seemed to Henrietta that Madame de Follet stirred and looked up. As if from far away, her voice softly called Paul's name. But he could not hear her speak. With a smile never to be forgotten he stretched out both hands, took a step forwards, then fell heavily to the ground.

Trembling all over, filled with a strange terror, Henrietta awoke. How often and often she had dreamed of Paul during the last few weeks, dreamed that he was looking everywhere, not for the play, but for the little old book lent to her by Ted, yet never till to-night in her dreams had she failed to baffle his search. Never before had any dream been so vivid. This one for the first few minutes after waking still held her with the strength of a vision.

Not stopping to think, unable to subdue her own fears, Henrietta left the saloon, and went straight on deck regardless of wind or weather.

The night was dark, the deck already a little slippery with spray. The figure of the man at the wheel faintly discernible stood out with shadowy indistinctness. The deck seemed to be deserted, but Henrietta had scarcely set foot on it before Ted came to her side. This evening for the second time only since their engagement she clung to him like a frightened child, laying her cheek against his shoulder, seeing even in the semi-darkness the sudden expression of warm tenderness leap into his eyes as he looked down at her, tenderness coupled with amazement.

"I was just coming down to you. What is it?" he asked under his breath. "What has frightened you?"

"I fell asleep in the saloon," she said. "I had a strange dream. Let me stay here with you for a little while, Ted."

Let her stay with him!

He brought her to a seat fairly under shelter. "I don't know about that. It's a nasty damp night. You will get cold, darling. Come downstairs with me."

In a minute or two she pleaded, for once off her balance and uttering the first thought that came uppermost, "I wanted you so dreadfully. There will soon be no one else left, only you. When mamma is married don't go far away while I am with Aunt Catherine."

Then Ted, the calm phlegmatic Ted stooped, kissing her with a sudden passionate tenderness startling above measure.

The colour rushed into Henrietta's face, and the next moment she found herself released.

"Forgive me," he said under his breath. "I couldn't help it."

"There is nothing to forgive," she rejoined shyly, "only to-night I was frightened. You must think me very foolish."

"Couldn't you try to be foolish a little oftener?" he asked, his own voice scarcely as steady as usual.

Moved by some fine instinct, almost unconsciously Henrietta came closer to him, slipping her hand into his.

A good many minutes went by unheeded while the two stood together in the semi-twilight. Then he led her down to the saloon, brought a cloak and wrapped her up in it. The girl let herself be cared for and waited on, with a happy consciousness of protection.

"What frightened you?" said Ted presently. "Do you often have bad dreams?"

Henrietta hesitated. "Yes, sometimes. Nightmare is a very weak-minded ailment. I try not to pay any attention to it."

"All the same, tell me, what were you dreaming about to-night?" he said quietly.

Once again she hesitated. In the warm brightly lit cabin with Ted at her side, the first vivid consciousness of her dream had faded. Besides, again and again during the last few weeks she had often dreamed of Paul—Paul and the old book of plays. No one knew, not even Mr. Clifford, of the nightmare which so often troubled her rest. Haunted by its constant repetition she had sensibly striven to prevent her own fears running away with her.

At this moment she began to feel ashamed of her sudden panic. And yet, and yet the thought of the look seen for the first time on Paul's face to-night brought a strange dread to her heart.

"Dreams are strange things," she said slowly, as if weighing her words. "I was dreaming about Paul; I often do."

"What was happening to Paul, Hetty?"

He asked the question naturally enough, but for the first time Henrietta remembered that her dream would not bear repetition.

"Paul seemed to be in dreadful danger," she said a little faintly, "and I, I could do nothing. He looked so ill before he went away that sometimes I get nervous. I suppose it is only natural to dream about anyone who is often in one's thoughts."

"I suppose it is," said Ted. "But I wouldn't allow myself to be worried about dreams if I were you, dear. They always go by contraries. Paul was looking much better when I last saw him in Paris. I hear he is already spoken of as the younger De Follet. These daily articles of his for the paper are creating quite a stir. I don't think you have any need to feel anxious about him."

Henrietta drew a long breath of relief. Ted asked no more dangerous questions, made no demur when she presently suggested going to bed. But he went himself to call Sophie, and desired her to occupy the second berth in the girl's cabin for the rest of the night. With a comfortable sense of a second presence, of Sophie's quiet breathing, Henrietta tired out, soon slept. But Ted left to himself went back on deck. With a face paler than usual he walked up and down hour after hour regardless of wind and weather. "Paul, always Paul, even in her dreams," he murmured at last, "never myself."

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

ANOTHER two days of rather bad weather saw the yacht safely at Genoa. After leaving the "Clytie" and its owner, an easy journey brought the travellers to San Rimini. They reached their destination late in the evening and drove straight to the Villa Patricia.

Henrietta could see little on the way, the night being dark and cloudy. She only gathered the impression of a hilly road, sharp turns, and of the sweet, penetrating scent of the heliotrope, as the carriage presently passed through a long, winding garden.

Mrs. Godwin declaring herself to be very tired, Ted at once took both ladies to their rooms, and wished them good-night, saying that the villa would wait very well for inspection till next morning. He himself would be downstairs for the next hour or two if anything were wanted.

Henrietta, by request, soon left Sophie with her mother, and went to her own room. Here she found a smiling, dark-eyed maid, who greeted her with various sly glances of admiration, and with a respectful offer of attendance.

Abandoning bags and portmanteaus to a pair of willing hands, Henrietta sat down in the nearest chair, and looked round appreciatively. The room wore a homelike air already. The night being unusually cold, a good fire, half wood, half fir-cones, burnt on a wide hearth. The logs resting on bronze supports were half bedded in a pile of silvery ashes. The bed at the far end of the room looked inviting, with its snowy draperies and embroidered mosquito curtains. A profusion of violets and roses, together with several exquisite photos of Godwin's Rest and of the Grange, testified to so much loving forethought for her comfort, that Henrietta's own eyes brightened with pleasure as she looked at them. Paulina, the Italian maid, soon produced all that was wanted, and reduced confusion to comfort. Dismissed, presently, with a kindly good-night, she left the room, shaking her head. It was not fit for the lady to undress herself, or to brush out that beautiful hair, but milord had certainly said, "Pauline, do exactly as you are told." The hour was late, and milord's orders were not to be gainsaid. With which philosophical reflection Paulina went to bed.

Henrietta, glad to be alone, was just preparing to undress, when Sophie entered, saying that Madame seemed quite over-tired; if Mademoiselle would come it might be as well.

"Did mamma send for me?" Henrietta asked.

The old *bonne* shook her head.

"Is it a headache, Sophie?"

"No, mademoiselle. I don't know what it is," said Sophie, with a concerned air. "Madame was quite well when I left her, and then she rang her bell, only to send me away again."

Henrietta went at once to the bedroom.

Mrs. Godwin was standing by the fireplace. A pile of letters lay open on a writing table. A chair hastily pushed back showed that it had just been occupied. In one hand she held a pink paper, but at the sound of the opening door, she started violently, crushed up the thin sheet and threw it into the fire.

The apprehensive, almost terrified gesture filled Henrietta with a sudden nameless fear. She drew nearer.

"Aren't you quite well, mamma?"

"Why shouldn't I be well? What have you come back for?" Mrs. Godwin asked, sharply. Then she sat down again and leaned both hands on the writing table, picking up first one letter and then another, with an air of indecision.

"Must you do any writing? Can I help you?" Henrietta asked, gently.

"Oh, I shan't write letters to-night, Henrietta. There's one here for you from May; you might read it to me."

Without asking any more questions, Henrietta tore open the envelope, and began reading, all the time nervously conscious of her mother's half-averted face, turned to the fire with a faint expression of horror on it.

The letter, the girl could see, only served as an excuse. Its contents fell on deaf ears. What would happen, what would be said when May's three sheets came to an end? She read on mechanically, filled with an unspoken dread, till Mrs. Godwin suddenly started up and snatched the letter away from her.

Seriously alarmed, the girl took one of the hot, restless hands in both her own cool ones.

"Dear mamma," she said, "won't you tell me what is the matter?"

"I really think your uncle is the most inconsiderate person I ever came across," Mrs. Godwin answered at last. "He never writes explicitly, or tells one where to write to."

"Haven't you heard from uncle John, to-night, mamma?"

"Yes, I have a letter, but he only says that he will be in Turin this evening, and at Monte Carlo to-morrow. He doesn't say what hotel. No telegram will find him. I do wish you wouldn't stare at me so." Then suddenly her mood changed, and she burst into tears. Henrietta put an arm round her, trembling. At this moment there stole over her the sickening certainty of bad news.

"Mamma, speak," she said. Then extremity sharpening her wits, "Mamma, that was a telegram about Paul; what was in it?"

"I intended to keep it from you," said her mother, in a frightened voice. "Only I don't know what to do, I am so perplexed and miserable. I am afraid we can't do anything to-night, and I can't see Ted with my hair down." Here she paused, and stood hesitating in miserable uncertainty.

"Mamma, dear," Henrietta implored again, "you have had bad news, please tell me."

"Paul is very ill," Mrs. Godwin said, slowly. "But, Henrietta, that is not all—he has hurt himself."

Remembering her dream, the girl put out her hand as if to ward off a blow. A wall of blackness seemed to be rising over her head. By a supreme effort, she scattered the mists from her brain.

"Not that," she cried; "not that, mamma; anything but that."

"Yes, *that*," said her mother, in a subdued voice. "Madame de Follet telegraphs, he has done himself an injury. She wants John at once; she doesn't know where he is."

Henrietta so far kneeling at her mother's side swayed suddenly. "Why did you burn the telegram?" she asked. Her voice was quite quiet, but her face terrified her mother.

"I can't answer questions," she replied, a little incoherently, with the gesture of a frightened child, shrinking away from breaking bad news.

"You—you startled me; but Paul, I fear he is out of his mind."

Henrietta's eyes dilated strangely. For one moment it seemed to her that she was dying. Then almost in a whisper, she asked, "When did that telegram come for us?"

"It has been here for nearly two days, Henrietta. But what can we do till to-morrow? We can only wait."

"Do!" Henrietta said. Why, we can go to him ourselves. Don't you see, if Uncle John can't hear till to-morrow, we, at any rate, can start now."

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Godwin in nervous helplessness, "I couldn't undertake such a journey."

"You have just come all the way here, mamma."

Mrs. Godwin shivered away from the girl's insistence. "Oh, no, I couldn't go, I couldn't bear the fatigue. Besides, I saw someone once, someone who was insane; and now it would be too——"

Here she paused suddenly, regarding the girl with a furtive expression, a look half frightened, wholly perplexed. She had only revealed the truth then, because of her own misery. She had only thought of herself. Henrietta sprang to her feet.

"Mamma, do you mean that you are afraid?"

Never before had there sounded such a note in her voice. At that moment, the scaffolding, built up by love that had hidden and softened everything, fell, and she saw her mother's character in its true colours. A wave of agony swept over her. The one simple sentence came like a cry, pleading for the baser nature against itself.

But some souls recognise no such appeal. Mrs. Godwin turned away, raising her lace handkerchief.

"Oh, I can't go, I couldn't, Henrietta. What can you be thinking about? Your uncle must see to all that. It is no woman's work."

"You mean," said Henrietta, "that you can do nothing till to-morrow."

"I don't see what is to be done. Don't look like that. It is impossible."

Henrietta made no further appeal. Such a sickness of heart came over her, that she involuntarily stretched out one hand, resting it on the back of a chair. The mother she had known had vanished. This forlorn figure, sitting on a corner of the sofa, shedding miserable tears, could not even link itself to her own forlornness. When she spoke again, her first words showed the complete subversion of old relationships.

"I see," she said. "Lie still, mamma. I see, for you it is impossible."

Without another word, she turned to leave the room.

"Don't go," Mrs. Godwin exclaimed. "Come back, I want you." But her call fell for once on deaf ears. The next moment the door shut.

Left alone, she sat and feebly wrung her hands. One telegram had been burnt, and no one beside herself knew that there had been *another*. How could she ever bring herself to tell the whole truth? And what would happen when Henrietta knew it?

The minutes dragged slowly by; then Sophie entered, looking disturbed.

"I suppose Mademoiselle is indoors," Mrs. Godwin said, nervously. "Surely she wouldn't go without her hat, it would set everyone talking."

Picking up the little *capote*, with its tufted feather, left an hour before by Henrietta on a chair, she smoothed it with mechanical fingers.



"No, no," Sophie answered, reassuringly, "Mademoiselle has gone to the sitting-room."

Mrs. Godwin drew a breath of relief. A wild fear had crossed her that Henrietta might have left the house. This woman was never meant to exist except under everyday ordinary circumstances. Still in a state of nervous tension, she first of all had her hair put up again, and got into a loose tea gown, and then for the second time dismissed Sophie, refusing all offers of further assistance.

Henrietta, meantime, made her way swiftly downstairs to the sitting-room. The unfamiliar look of the staircase in the semi-darkness, the very chairs and tables, all linked themselves to the terrible feeling of nightmare which had come true; nightmare not to be broken in upon by daylight. She found Ted easily enough, and came up to him with her hair hanging down in thick plaits, over her white wrapper, looking like a ghost.

Sitting busily writing at a small table, he looked up at her approach, and started to his feet. But when he took her cold hand and would have led her to a seat, she drew away from him, saying in that low, pathetic voice, only heard in acute suffering, "Don't, Ted, don't. I must keep steady."

The look on her face startled him, but he did not tease her with a single question, letting her take her own time to speak.

"I have brought some bad news," she said, slowly. "I wish I knew, dear Ted, what to say to you."

"Tell me," he said, soothingly, even more alarmed by the pallor of her face, the stillness of her manner, than by her words.

"We have bad news," she repeated, "about Paul. He has met with an accident."

Involuntarily his arm tightened round her. She could not see the spasm that crossed his face.

"Paul is dangerously ill," she went on, speaking in short, difficult sentences. "They fear the worst—Madame de Follet has telegraphed. Uncle John is wanted at once; he will be in Turin to-night, but we don't know what hotel. Someone ought to go straight there, to Turin to find him: unless you have had a letter."

Ted drew her closer to him. "I have heard from Evelyn, Hetty. They will be at the Cavour by this time. I can telegraph at once."

Henrietta steadied herself again with an effort.

"Madame de Follet's telegram," she said, "it is twenty-four hours old. I can't give it you; it was burnt by accident. Say that Paul is in danger—but you will know what to say, Ted."

A sudden sense of exhaustion and unreality begun to steal over her. Even Ted, the last anchor in a sea of unmeasured desolation, could not be told the whole truth.

"I shan't be gone long, only a few minutes," he said, reassuringly. "This anxiety is hard to bear; but take courage, dear, Paul is so young and strong, we must hope for the best. He may live to be an old man, yet."

Henrietta shivered, and made no answer. She sat there, looking straight in front of her, with Paul's words, spoken only a few months ago, ringing in her ears:



"I was wrong, Hetty, I know. Whatever happened, you would not be afraid of me."

What if Paul had sense to remember her still? What if he wanted her—if Mrs. Godwin could not be induced to go to him?

The next minute Ted's hand came on her shoulder, and he held some wine to her lips. She swallowed a mouthful mechanically, then put the glass away.

"Ted," she said, "there is something else."

"Would you like me to go to him?" he asked.

Henrietta looked up startled, her strained eyes gathered confidence from the hazel eyes looking down at her. She turned and clung to him like a reed in a storm.

"No," she said, "no, but Paul, Paul and I——"

Ted suddenly straightened himself. She felt rather than heard his quickened breathing, but he only said, very quietly, "You want to go to him yourself, is that it?"

Henrietta's hand went to her throat.

"Yes," she said, "I want—that."

"There is no train to-night," he said, pitifully. "You and your mother must wait a few hours."

Henrietta turned her head away. "Mamma——" she began, but could not finish the sentence. Her voice broke, though she stood looking in front of her dried eyes.

Involuntarily Ted's hands clenched themselves together.

"I will send the telegram now," he said. "We can make plans afterwards."

"I know," she said, feverishly. "Go now, Ted, go at once."

But he took her upstairs to her mother's door first, and as he turned away, Henrietta caught sight of his face.

In the midst of her own desolation, of the horrible fear that had come upon her, there was nothing selfish in her grief. She came after him unexpectedly, almost involuntarily, and touched her lips to his cheek.

Before Ted, moved and startled, could say anything, the door had shut between them.

Mrs. Godwin still sat on the sofa. On Henrietta's entrance she looked up nervously, passing a lace handkerchief across her lips.

"I have seen Ted," the girl said, wondering in a dull mechanical way at her own calmness. "He will telegraph to the Cavour at once. Uncle John and Evelyn are there."

Mrs. Godwin continued to look at her with a half-frightened, half-undecided expression. "If I had known you were sending.—It will be no use," she said, under her breath.

A fresh sickening apprehension dawned on Henrietta. "What will be of no use, mamma?"

Mrs. Godwin rose, locking and unlocking her hands, her eyes on the fire. "I meant it all for the best," she said; "only you are so impetuous, so alarming. I have tried to break the news to you I meant."

"Don't tell me what you meant, mamma; please tell me what has happened," said poor Henrietta.

Once again Mrs. Godwin hesitated. Henrietta had always been so

unreasoningly fond of Paul, and one would never know how she might take anything.

"It has all been so dreadful this evening," she said, nervously. "I have been afraid to tell you, but I had two telegrams together. Only you were so upset, I did not dare tell you the whole truth; I did not dare," she repeated, her voice broke, and two miserable tears trickled down her cheeks. Her slow mode of speech was torture to Henrietta. The sickening anticipation at the girl's heart deepened, nearly choking her, but Mrs. Godwin, in unusual agitation, seemed to have lost the power of arranging her sentences. "I have had more news than I told you," she went on. "The second telegram had been delayed in transmission. It is from such an out-of-the-way place." Here she came to a dead stop.

Henrietta took a step forward and caught hold of her mother's wrist; anything was better than this unbearable suspense. "Mamma, speak," she said.

A desperate determination took possession of Mrs. Godwin, the courage of a cowardly nature, hunted into a corner where facing round afforded the only means of outlet.

"The second telegram," she said, "it contained worse news; it said that all was over: that Paul was dead, I fear, by his own hand."

Henrietta neither moved nor cried out. No cry was possible to her. Had there ever been anything, she wondered, vaguely, anything in the world but this black gulf of agony through which she seemed to be sinking?

The strain of the past half hour, nay, the strain of the past summer, had told more heavily upon her sensitive and finely-strung nature than she herself realised, and now the re-action set in, sweeping all further powers of resistance from her failing grasp like a tide.

For a moment she stood quivering all over, with a face absolutely vacant. The room turned round: a great wall of darkness rose over her head. The whole world seemed to run red before her eyes—then she remembered no more.

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### CHAPTER XXXIII.

On his return from sending off the message Ted found the sitting-room empty, and went straight upstairs. Mrs. Godwin came to meet him in the passage pale and tremulous.

"How dreadfully tired you do look," she said, in a subdued voice. "But I don't wonder. Everything is so dreadful this evening. It is enough to upset a sensitive person completely. Come in here Ted. I must speak to you alone."

"The telegram is gone to Turin," he said gravely. "Where is Henrietta?"

Mrs. Godwin twisted her rings nervously round her fingers.

"In her own room, Ted. I wish you had come to me before you went out. Henrietta was too hasty." Anxious, worried, upset, she

might be, but deep down in her heart lay a ground tone of irritation against John. If the latter had not gone off on his honeymoon she need not have been thrust into the false position of a breaker of bad news. No other duty could have been so repugnant, could have thrown her so completely off her balance.

She had a strong dread of anything unattached to the highways of society, the beaten track where manners, customs, dress, feelings, courteous tradespeople, gas, and water were all to be found in their proper places. The events of the evening had opened up unknown country, where she found herself wandering like a castaway. Unprepared for disasters, without a landmark or a single fingerpost, small wonder if she blundered.

"I wish I had seen you earlier," she repeated. "Henrietta was too hasty, but of course she did not know that I had more information." Here she paused while Ted stood waiting with a strained look on his face.

"I know you will feel it very much," she went on, stumblingly, as if repeating an imperfect lesson. "It is all very dreadful and so sudden. Henrietta did not know the whole truth when she came to you. It is all over, has been over for two days. Paul died before we reached Genoa."

Ted walked over to the window, and stood there with his back to the room.

Mrs. Godwin watched him helplessly.

After a while she said in a subdued voice: "Perhaps you would like to see the telegram."

Ted turned round and came back slowly. "I thought," he said, "I thought it was burnt." His voice, hoarse and changed, was scarcely under control yet.

"The second telegram was burnt; not the first," said Mrs. Godwin. "There have been two." She pulled a crumpled piece of paper from her pocket. "It is all very shocking Ted, really dreadful. I suppose there can be no doubt that poor Paul made away with himself?"

Ted recoiled: stood for a moment in silence, then took the telegram from her. His own hand shook more than hers did. In dazed fashion he ran his eyes over the lines.

"But there is nothing here," he exclaimed, "nothing to indicate what you say."

"The wording certainly is very confused Ted, but I quite understand it so, it says he has done himself an injury."

Once more Ted slowly and carefully read the telegram; then saw in a moment the possible mistake, saw that the use of a reflective verb might have easily misled anyone with an imperfect knowledge of French, though even yet he doubted his own discovery. "Surely," he said, this could not be all you had to go upon?"

Mrs. Godwin evaded a direct answer. "How do you read it," she asked. "What do you mean, Ted?"

"Mean," he said—convinced at last—a little of his own grief and indignation sounding now in his voice—"Mean! Why there is

nothing here to warrant what you say. Only mention of fatal injury through a fall. There is no word of insanity or of self-destruction."

She looked slightly confused. "It does say he has hurt himself, that the brain is affected so far as I can make out. And of course though we never mention it, I believe poor Paul was off his head once. Very likely after all you will find that I am right. One can't be sure ever about the wording of these foreign telegrams."

"You have been making a terrible mistake," Ted said gravely, her persistence filling him with an instinctive sense of aversion and repugnance. "I am thankful that you came to me first of all."

Mrs. Godwin was silent. He turned upon her suddenly struck by a nameless fear.

"Henrietta," he asked. "You have said nothing of this to Henrietta?"

The touch of fierce anxiety in his manner made her shrink away from him.

"I only said I was afraid it was the case, Ted. I had naturally gathered that he was out of his mind."

"And you told her so?" Voice and face were alike so altered that she began to feel frightened.

"Yes," she answered, vainly trying to gather courage. "She knows. It was necessary to tell her."

"But you have never told her what you have told me. You have never hinted that Paul took his own life?"

"The French was so confused," she persisted, unable even then to own herself in the wrong; "anyone might have been misled by it."

Ted put out his hand imperatively. "Where is Henrietta, I must see her at once?"

"She is in my dressing-room, she is not well enough to see anyone."

"I cannot help that. I must see her," he repeated.

His manner alarmed her into outward acquiescence, "Very well, you must please yourself. But—she is ill, Ted."

He looked at her now, without speaking, but his eyes seemed to compel the truth.

"She has fainted," Mrs. Godwin said nervously. "Sophie is with her and I sent for an English doctor. He is here. I thought I was right. I have acted for the best as I always do. I——"

She paused now, struck into silence at last before the expression on Ted's face.

"My God," he said, yet with no touch of irreverence in his voice. "My God! to think that one woman's good intentions should have wrecked three lives!"

Mrs. Godwin sat miserable and offended, the slow tears trickling down her cheeks, her sense of personal injury stronger at the moment than any other feeling. Never had anyone so completely, so unkindly humiliated her.

Ted looking straight in front of him had become oblivious of her presence. Without another word or glance he presently turned away and left the room. For the second time this evening Mrs. Godwin found herself alone.

Going upstairs Ted knocked softly on the dressing-room door. Sophie opened to him.

"I want to see Mademoiselle," he said.

The old *bonne* looked at him and her kind face quivered. "Come, then," she said. "M. le Medecin is here, but it is a long faint. Mademoiselle is not conscious yet. She has broken a blood-vessel."

Half an hour later Ted, followed by the doctor, came out into the passage.

"Harm," said the latter, in answer to his troubled enquiry. "No harm at all: on the contrary, we ought to have sent for you sooner. Those tears have saved her."

There was a half curious, wholly kindly look on his face as he watched the handsome young fellow turn away. But to Ted's lips, despite his twenty-nine years and his manhood there rose something suspiciously like a sob.

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#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE old harbour of La Navette was unchanged, nay, it almost seemed in this one spot as if time itself had stood still.

The beach with its high cliffs remained the same. The old headstones may be were a little whiter, the White House itself a little more weather-stained, and to-day on the beach sitting waiting, as she had sat years before, might have been seen Madame de Follet herself.

Change could be traced in her face if nowhere else: in the silvered hair, the painfully attenuated features in the dark eyes with their deeply sunken lids, in the droop of the whole figure. Anyone looking at her might have recalled Oberman's pathetic saying: "J'ai tout perdu longtemps avant de finir moi-même."

Sitting there motionless, as of old she seemed to be listening, looking through the narrow, straightened outlet to the open sea beyond, where as of old the afternoon sunlight lay long on the water like the sword of the angel at the gate of Paradise. Before the lapse of many minutes a boat rowed by two fishermen entered the cove and grounded on the beach.

Rising then with a mournful dignity, Madame de Follet stood waiting the approach of Godwin, who leaped out of the boat. Pale, haggard and travel worn, he came slowly up the shingle. The news of Paul's death had met him at Les Graces.

He drew nearer, and across a newly-made grave the two looked at each other silently, while a whole tide of sorrowful recollections rolled between them.

Madame de Follet put out her hand, saying in a monotonous voice, "Have you come to reproach me?"

"No, no," he said. "You did all you could. If anything could have saved him he would have been saved by your care."

"I never left him," she said. "I had the best advice from Les Graces and from Paris too, but it was all of no use."

"Your telegram was delayed for two days before it reached me," he said to her in a voice low and uncertain, "or I should have been here sooner."

"In any case," she answered slowly, "you could not have been here in time. Paul was never conscious."

Not the faintest touch of emotion could be heard in her voice, only a slow hushed stillness, the quiet utterance of a person who has suffered too much at the hands of life to cry out any more. Paul being dead, her manner seemed to say that nothing else mattered.

Over-wrought, tired out by a long and hurried journey and a sleepless night, John suddenly broke down. He turned away his head, brushing his hand more than once across his eyes.

After a time with a strong effort he recovered himself, and glanced at his companion. She seemed to have forgotten his presence. Her gaze rested on the narrow opening leading to the world outside, from which she had so long been shut off. The gulls wheeled to and fro overhead, the air grew colder, while the sea tossed and fretted against the rocks as if still troubled by a recent storm.

Noting now the transparent face on which death had so plainly set a seal, the emaciation of the whole figure, John presently spoke again. "You are looking very ill," he said. "Surely you ought not to be out here any longer."

"I wanted to see it all again," she answered. "Possibly I shall not come here any more." Taking the arm he offered she turned away now, and the two walked up to the house together.

John shuddered involuntarily as he entered the sitting-room. It would have been hard anywhere to imagine anything more melancholy than the interior of the great barrack-like, half-deserted building.

The short daylight was dying: the rooms and passages seemed full of shadows from one end to the other.

Madame de Follet placed herself by the sitting-room fire, and absently held out both hands to the blaze, after seeing with mechanical courtesy that her companion was seated.

"I know so little," John said presently. "I only heard the bare facts of Paul's death at Les Graces. Till then I hoped for the best. It must have been dreadfully sudden."

"There is very little to tell you," she said gently. "But I know you will like to hear everything. That first Saturday Paul arrived here from Paris. He had come to spend Sunday if I would have him. I had been following his work for the last year with great interest. I suppose you have seen it. Those daily articles of his in the paper. They always filled me with amazement. There seemed to me to be something incredible in the ease with which they were written, something wonderfully brilliant and mature in their finish. They surprised not only me, they seem to have created a sort of furor during the course of the last few months in Paris."

She paused here, looking into the fire, while John sat silently waiting, unable to ask a question.

"That evening when Paul arrived he looked to me wonderfully well," she went on. "After supper we sat together, and he talked as I have never heard Paul talk before, exquisitely; but he seemed



even then curiously touched by a fear which he could not put into words. He quoted those lines of Keats. You know them—

'When I have fears that I may cease to be  
Before my pen has gleamed my teeming brain.'

"He told me that lately his ideas had been so many, saying that he found not the least difficulty in expressing himself, and that he was writing far into each night.

"John, I cannot convey to you his look or the tone of voice in which he said to me 'I must live to write everything down. I must live to do some work in the world.' He spoke almost fiercely, as if he expected some opposing influence.

"And he had genius, I know it. I have not lived amongst books all my life for nothing. If he had lived he would have carved out a future for himself. He would have been "a brave soldier in the liberation war of humanity.

"On Sunday he seemed to be suffering from headache, but he made very light of it. We spent a quiet day together. In the evening we had a good deal of talk again. That second play of his. He repeated me whole scenes from it, and they were marvellous. The whole thing; I saw it there before me. Now, it will never be finished."

Her head drooped suddenly; Godwin took her hand in his, and she did not draw it away.

"We sat up late," she went on. "I never go early to bed, but that evening after a time I dozed in my chair. Every now and then I heard Paul turning the leaves of a book. I could feel that he was near me.

"Then suddenly I became broad awake, to see that he was standing up with both hands stretched out, and his book on the floor. He stood while one might have counted ten, then he fell down striking his head against the bookcase. He never spoke again."

John's finger's closed on the hand he held. He drew a long breath.

Suddenly Madame de Follet turned and looked at him.

"Think me mad if you will," she said quietly. "The doctors will tell you that death was caused by the rupture of a vessel on the brain, but I tell you, John, if you had seen the look on Paul's face, you yourself would have been content to let him go. What he saw as he stood there I cannot tell you, but *joy killed him, not pain: joy that was ecstasy.*"

A long silence fell between them. Antoine, bowed and white-haired, came in noiselessly to put another log on the fire.

Presently Madame de Follet spoke again: "He ought never to have found out," she said, as if following some previous train of thought. "You were quite right. If he had forgotten the past, better still if he had never found out, he might have been alive now."

"Don't say that," John exclaimed earnestly. "You must not blame yourself. I said everything I could to dissuade him. I was selfish: I see it now, but he was set upon coming here. Paul had not a nature to forget."

"He forgot nothing," she answered dreamily. "I hoped when you



took him away as a child that his past would fade away, and yet, heaven forgive me! I did not hope it. I craved to see him again. A woman's nature is often contradictory. The day of my husband's funeral! I shall never forget it. After so many years of solitary life, he came back to me out of the past—older but the same—the one sweet sane soul among generations of mad folk. Came back with no reproach only grief in his eyes. I saw then that suffering had not passed him by, that he had forgotten nothing: but here I knew everything would remind him of the past. This house tenanted by so much unhappiness was no fit place for him. Self controlled he might be, but I could see he had the artist's nature to the finger-tips. I begged him then never rashly to take up the burden of other people's offences, never to fetter himself by a vow he might not have strength to keep, if he were tempted to break it.

He looked at me with a strange smile, and turned away, but he could not deceive me. It seemed to me then, that my punishment was greater than I could bear.

She rose after a time, and Godwin followed her across the room to where her steps halted momentarily before a large glass bookcase full of papers. "There is my husband's last great work," she said sighing. "He never finished it, and half of it is quite unintelligible. Before he gave up writing, he often destroyed in a few minutes the labour of months. It is the wreck of his intellect in there: nothing else. But see, I have something to show you." Unlocking a drawer in a table by the bookcase she took out a small bundle of papers written over closely in a childish hand, a hand that was marked and firm even then.

"That was Paul's first complete story," she said, "the first thing he ever finished. 'A Dryad of the Nineteenth Century,' he called it. He always loved Anderson, even as a child. He said—I remember it all as well as yesterday—he said if the dryad could suffer she ought to have a soul. She ought to end differently. He was reading over old things last Sunday, and he sat for a long time with that paper in his hand, with the strangest expression on his face. Perhaps you would like to have it."

The open drawer John could see held a strange collection of odds and ends. Paul's pocket-knife on which he had carved his own height, taken against the sitting-room door. Pencils and shells, old exercises, and one small parcel done up by itself in silver paper.

Unfolding the wrapping Madame de Follet took out a handful of sunny curls.

"I cut them off," she said, "when he had that illness. I remember it went to my heart to do it. He had such pretty hair." She spoke very quietly, taking up one bright ring, and drawing it tenderly over her fingers as if it were still some delicate living thing. Her voice did not falter, but the very quietness and calm of her manner tried John's self control more than any open lamentation. Refolding paper and manuscript together she tendered the little packet to him. He hesitated, and she read the look in his eyes.

"Take it," she said, "take them both. In a few weeks time at longest I shall not be here."

Still without a word he followed her presently through an inner door and entered a second room. Here candles burned at the head and foot of the bed. The chamber was very still and sweet with a scent of violets. Mechanically he walked to the bedside. After turning down the sheet she left him alone. As he gazed, the tumult of emotion at his own heart became suddenly stilled.

The young face pale and motionless in its last sleep, yet wore a look of gladness so intense that John stood awed, and startled. Then Madame de Follet's words came back to him and he bowed his head. "Joy killed him, not pain, joy that was ecstasy."

*(To be continued.)*

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## The Drama.

CERTAINLY the French summary of the English as a nation of hypocrites, would seem to be not without reason as far as The Drama is concerned. Mrs. Grundy can apparently swallow with impunity such highly seasoned dramas as "La Tosca," when played by Sarah Bernhardt, but is expected in some quarters to take exception to "The Conquerors." Fortunately, in this case the public have decided to see and judge for themselves, and the verdict of eye-witnesses cannot fail to remove the first erroneous impression that "The Conquerors" was a very naughty piece. Compared with the recent strong mental food offered to the public in such pieces as "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," "The Derby Winner," "An Artist's Model," and "The Liars," "The Conquerors" is a pleasant contrast. The chief weak point of the play lies indeed in the unnecessary hysterics of Miss Julia Neilson, in the scene at the Inn, where Eric von Rodeck intimates that he intends to take a dishonourable revenge on Yvonne de Grandpré for the insult she offered him in public. His threat is so delicately conveyed, however, that the remark made by the lady next me in the stalls seemed fully justified—"Well, she *is* in a hurry to jump at an evil conclusion."

Suffice it to say that Mr. George Alexander never showed to better advantage than as Eric von Rodeck, whose quick remorse for his evil design—repented before carried into execution—ought to have satisfied the scruples of any audience, while Mr. H. B. Irving scored a

great success in the personification of the villain, Jean Baudin. Miss Julia Neilson looked very handsome, though she evinced a tendency to overact the part assigned to her.

"Julius Cæsar" and "The Little Minister" must, undoubtedly, rank as two—if not *the* two—of the best plays running. The story of "The Little Minister" is too well known to require even a brief outline of the plot. Pathos and humour are most happily combined in Barrie's play. Miss Winifred Emery is charming in the part of Lady Barbara, and Mr. Cyril Maude is admirably adapted to the rôle of the Rev. Gavin Dishart. The acting is first rate throughout, and the play most deservedly popular.

Equally excellent is the rendering of Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar," by Beerbohm Tree, and a powerful caste. Apart from the interest of this historical drama, the staging is very fine, and the scenic effects leave nothing to be desired. Lovers of Shakespeare should not miss an opportunity of seeing "Julius Cæsar."

Of "The Liars," one can only say that Charles Wyndham and Mary Moore are the chief attractions, for certainly there is little in the play itself to recommend it. None of the characters are calculated to inspire admiration, and the flighty heroine is too deceitful and too vacillating to be worth the general lying indulged in on her behalf. A more unlovable set of characters than those brought together in "The Liars" it would be hard to conceive.

M. WHEELER.

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